

Orphans and the Turn(s) to Childhood in Spanish Cinema: Transitions and Transformations.

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Statements

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Summary

Through its analysis of filmic children, this thesis aims to shed light on depictions of Spanish societal changes and explore whether the concept of kinlessness has a special resonance in the Spanish cinematic context. This investigation of the depiction and representation of the orphan will take the form of a close reading of four key films: *Tómbola* (Lucía 1962) *Cría cuervos* (Saura 1976), *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* (Serrador 1976) and *Estiu 1993* (Simón 2017). The ever-expanding field of visual cultures within Hispanic studies has demonstrated that examining societal change through the lens of artistic visual outputs encourages a broader consideration of historical and socio-political change. I inform my analysis with insights from Childhood Studies and Spanish cultural contexts. Where the characters in my texts will play a part in directors' socio-political objectives to address social issues in their work, the reading offered in this thesis suggests that these films can be considered as part of a third cine con niño genre, one made for the child's benefit, perhaps better phrased as cine sobre el niño.

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Preface

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Introduction

Examining the Orphan Child of Spanish Cinema

It is night. Children are playing in the streets of Barcelona. The game is Grandmother's footsteps. "And why aren't you crying?" an older boy asks Frida (Laia Artigas) the young protagonist of *Estiu 1993* (Carla Simón 2017). Frida stands, frozen in silence. It is true, she is not crying, despite, as we discover, the recent death of her mother as a result of the HIV/AIDS virus. Instead, she plays. Perhaps her play throughout the film is a chance to process grief. Her play may function as a method of navigation and a way to draw strength from the playful realm. As we follow the journey of this young orphan girl, and the other orphaned protagonists in the films examined here, we can unravel narrative threads of both a changing filmic child and changing Spanish attitudes to the family, the child, and the orphan.

From Marcelino of *Marcelino, pan, y vino* (Ladislao Vajda 1954), to Ana of *El espíritu de la colmena* (Víctor Erice 1973), to Ofelia of *El laberinto del fauno* (Guillermo del Toro 2006), Spanish language cinema has returned repeatedly to the trope of the innocent child orphan. Franco-era Spanish cinema from the 1950s employed the orphan child in religious and nationalist contexts. We also see the functional orphan appear in cinema about youth in crisis and under pressure, particularly in films including Saura's *Deprisa, deprisa* (1981) and the film *Barrio* (1998) from Fernando León de Aranoa. These are functional orphans to all intents and purposes, in the sense that whilst the child may not be an orphan that has lost his/her parents, the parental or authority figures are mostly absent in the narratives. Again, in the wave of recent Spanish 'memory boom' cinema that concentrates on the matter of the Civil War and subsequent dictatorship, the child orphan has often been portrayed as helpless.¹ *Secretos del corazón* (Armendáriz 1997), *La lengua de las mariposas* (Cuerda 1999), *El viaje del Carol* (Uribe 2002) and *El laberinto del fauno* (del Toro 2006) are all contemporary Spanish language films in which the innocent orphan child has been read as a victim. This is without mentioning the numerous terrifying orphan children of Spanish horror which could be seen as a contrast to these aforementioned innocent children. *El orfanato* (Bayona 2007), *Los otros* (Amenábar 2001) and *Insensibles* (Medina 2012) are just some examples of films that depict the

¹ According to Boyd (2008, p. 142) after the turn of the century in Spain, public discourse on the past experienced a shift from history to memory, in what has been labelled as "the memory boom". Thomas (2017, p. 146) has discussed how a range of films were released as part of this memory boom which tended to focus on a child protagonist and their encounter with the turbulent political past of the country.

orphan child as a monstrous other. In some instances, the innocence and monstrousness co-exist within the orphan child character.² Seemingly, the great majority of these films centre the action around the orphan child primarily to allude to socio-political situations specific to Spain, including the Civil War, Francoist fascism, the dictatorship, the transition to democracy, and the economic crisis.

Thus, a great deal of scholarship has argued that there is a symbolic use of the figure of the orphan child that we can frequently detect in Spanish film spanning from the dictatorship period until present-day. For instance, Stuart Davis explores how the child orphan is often employed in literature and film as principally a useful device for plot development. He notes that ‘the popular culture image of the orphan often views the bereft child as an agent overcoming adversity in favour of mobility, progress and resolution’ (Davis 2020, p. 120) and considers how this applies to religious Francoist cinema of 1950s such as *Marvelino* (Ladislao Vajda 1954) and *Joselito*.³ Another recurrent critical view is that in which the orphan child, in Civil War themed film especially, acts as a cypher for a void or a lack: a metonym for loss (Russek 2012, p. 136). Other iterations of this reading theorise that ‘Francoist and transitional films represent Republicans as whispering and tremulous children...helpless and uncared-for orphans’ (Bergero 2014, p. 635). Likewise, in relation to Spanish horror film, Luz C. Souto reflects on the depiction of the orphan child as the ominous, monstrous other. She directs her focus to horror films in which the child orphan is associated with what is ‘different’, with a great deal of negative connotations (2014, p. 8). I interrogate and evaluate these readings, asking how the representation of the child orphan character has changed in contemporary Spanish visual cultures from the Franco dictatorship to the present.

Through its analysis of filmic children, this thesis aims to shed light on depictions of Spanish societal changes and endeavours to explore whether the concept of kinlessness has a special resonance in the Spanish cinematic context. This investigation of the depiction and representation of the orphan will take the form of a close reading of four key films: *Tómbola* (Lucía 1962) *Cría cuervos* (Saura 1976), *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* (Serrador 1976) and *Estiu 1993* (Simón 2017). The ever-expanding field of visual cultures within Hispanic studies has demonstrated that examining societal change through the lens of artistic visual outputs encourages a broader consideration of

² According to Sarah Thomas, ‘the films equally attack the notion of the innocent child and reify it for their purposes of instilling terror. Indeed, the child needs to be seen as innocent for the subsequent shock factor of them killing or being killed to have any effect’ (Thomas, cited in Grizzle 2020).

³ *Joselito* was the young performer who starred in a number of films in 1950s and 60s directed by Antonio del Amo.

historical and socio-political change.⁴ In this introduction, I provide a foundational context upon which I build my own analysis. In the first instance, I set out my key research questions. This introduction then presents the social-political discourse that surrounds the figure of the child in Spain. I offer a picture of the understandings of childhood and orphanhood from secondary literature in Childhood Studies that will inform my reading of child-centred cinema. Following this, I present an overview of the history of child protagonists in Spanish cinema. I then turn to summarise the work on the child and child orphan character in the current field of literature. By surveying the contributions to the field, I then situate my own research within this landscape. I set out my choices in terms of the corpus of filmic texts. Finally, I outline the methodological approach and the structure of the thesis.

⁴ The year 2017 saw the emergence of the *Bulletin of Spanish Visual Studies*. See <<https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rbhv20/current>>.



Figure 1 Ofelia in *El laberinto del fauno*



Figure 2 Frida plays in *Estiu 1993*



Figure 3 Ana in *El espíritu de la colmena*

Spain and the Orphan Child: A Socio-cultural Overview

To examine orphan child protagonists in Spanish film, it is important to consider different historical and cultural definitions of childhood, youth, and the orphan. In the present section, I explore some of the key ideas from Childhood Studies and uncover definitions and understandings of the child orphan in the context of Spanish society.

Perhaps one of the most comprehensive works to study the child was completed by Philippe Ariès (1960), a historian of childhood, who explored the question of whether childhood was, in fact, a social construct. Consequently, the realm of sociological studies of the child has repeatedly returned to this idea. We see this principally in the writing of Allison James and Alan Prout, who, in much of their work, analyse the wider implication of understanding childhood as a social construction. In *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood* (James and Prout 1997), they posit that:

[C]hildren are and must be seen as active in the construction of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and the societies in which they live. Children are not just the passive subjects of social structures and processes. (1997, p. 8)

As a result, there has been an increasing number of child-centred studies that centralise the agency of the child. James and Prout further state that ‘childhood is a variable of social analysis’ and ‘cannot be divorced from themes of class, race, gender and so on’ (1997, p. 8). This is a fact of intersectionality and will be studied in this analysis of visual cultures, which considers Spanish historical and socio-political contexts. Indeed, critical thinkers, scientists and pedagogists in Spain were beginning to think about the world of the child in the early twentieth century. The period has been referred to as the century of the child and, as Anna Kendrick demonstrates, this was also the case in Spain. She explains that ‘pedagogy served as a platform for larger, existential arguments about human nature, integrity, and development.’ (Kendrick 2020, p. 1) and that:

[L]iterature, art, philosophy, and science embraced a secular ideal of early twentieth-century Spanish humanism through the ‘figure of the child’ and, critically, an interest in the living and vital child, movement, play, and constant states of change. (2020, p. 1)

Moving to the present day, it will also be useful here to reflect on, currently, exactly what is meant by orphan, or huérfano. Etymologically, the association between ‘huérfano’ and something that is missing, or a lack, is apparent:

huérfano, na

1. adj. Dicho de una persona menor de edad: A quien se le han muerto el padre y la madre o uno de los dos. (Name given to a minor: someone whose parents have died, or one parent has died).

3. adj. Falto de algo, y especialmente de amparo (Lacking something, primarily shelter). (Real Academia Española 2021)

Can we therefore understand that the orphan, in a Spanish context, is usually a young person or child who has lost parent(s) or who lacks a roof over his/her head? *The Oxford English Dictionary* offers the definition of orphan simply as ‘a child whose parents are dead’. In fact, a past definition of the word which points to continued patriarchal attitudes set out by the RAE in 2001 is ‘Dicho de una persona de menor edad: A quien se le han muerto el padre y la madre o uno de los dos, **especialmente el padre.**’ (Real Academia Española 2001). In the dictionary of the Institut d’Estudis Catalans we find the following definition:

Dit del menor d'edat que ha perdut el pare i la mare o algun d'ells dos. Orfe de pare. Orfe de mare. Orfe de pare i mare.

(The name given to the minor who has lost his father and mother or just one parent. Children without a mother or father.) (Institut d’Estudis Catalans 2021)

In a semantic context, then, there is a focus on what is missing, on what the child lacks. Common to most definitions illustrated here is the absence of parental figures. Further, the metaphorical use, as explained in the third definition in Castellano, is key. The consequential effects of this definition become apparent to some extent in visual, fictional Spanish representations of the child. The figure of the orphan seems to have the associative meanings of loss, trauma, and memory in artistic representation. Such representations are impossible to consider without looking at the social reality of the orphan in present-day Spanish society, as I will now turn to examine.

It is difficult to disentangle the Spanish understanding of the child from the layered rhetoric that has surrounded the identity of the orphan throughout the nation’s history and socio-political discourse. As the country continues to face a rapidly declining birth-rate,⁵ and various new crises that impact youth—*la generación ni-ni*, and the uncovering of the *niños robados* scandal among them—it is easy to see how it is tempting to co-opt the figure of the orphan child as symbol of crisis or loss in works of fiction. Transformations in the Spanish political system are ushering in a move away from the entrenched two-party system and have brought ideological clashes to the fore that concern the child. For example, Right-wing party Vox has called for a parent pin in Madrid in

⁵ This decline has been documented by Spanish news media, for example this article from newspaper *El País* reporting on births in Spain declining by around 30% during the last decade:
<https://elpais.com/sociedad/2019/06/19/actualidad/1560938428_722944.html>

which schools must request parents' permission before carrying out any classroom activities with an ideological or moral approach contrary to their convictions (El País 2020). At the same time, however, we are also witnessing increased awareness of children's rights in Spain. Spanish sociologists and psychologists working on subjects including adoption and the legislation surrounding children's legal rights have pointed to a need to reframe how we view the orphan child. Both the hierarchical tendency to view children as 'aun legalmente unos ciudadanos de segunda' (Massa 1992, p. 219) and the discourse surrounding orphaned and/or adopted children as 'niños abandonados' (Román 2013, p. 5) have been problematised by scholars. I further suggest that we can use these tendencies to trouble cinematic tropes and the metaphor of the 'helpless' orphan child.

Kinlessness made headlines in Spain during 2016, as the Fundación Familias de Colores denounced the abandonment of around 22,000 children in orphanages throughout Spain (Vera 2016). This alarming statistic, coupled with the resurgence of news media coverage on *Los niños robados del Franquismo* (The stolen children of Francoism), a process of state enforced orphanings carried out by the Franco regime, may play into the understanding of the kinless child in Spanish society. This layered social reality sits behind the visual rhetoric of children without parents in Spanish visual cultures. The preoccupation with the child has been investigated by scholars Andrew Willis (2004) and Maria Pramaggiore (2017, pp. 67-90) in their analysis of child-centred Spanish horror film. The (un)familiar/unheimlich orphan child can certainly be found in critically acclaimed Spanish horror film—for example in *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* (Ibáñez Serrador 1976) as we will see in Chapter Three of this thesis, and also in *El orfanato* (Bayona 2007). Sometimes this child is used as a conduit to engage with and call up a recent traumatic past. Could we posit that contemporary political trauma generates a strange fear around the figure of the child that strikes a chord with contemporary Spanish cinema spectators? That is to say, does the combination of the societal concern with the rapidly declining birth-rate, the stolen children of the Franco regime and recent campaigns for historical memory in the country contribute to an underlying, disconcerting tension when viewing the child on screen? Erin Hogan supports this idea in her investigation into the *nuevo cine con niño* of the memory boom, films which tend to situate the child figure in the Civil War and Franco regime, claiming 'production and spectator numbers indicate that childhood under Francoism continues to preoccupy Spanish audiences' (Hogan 2018, p. 13). Hence, Spanish films that utilise the child's body as a spectral presence to generate fear and tension play on present concerns, tying them all up in this uncanny child figure.

Another explanation of the repeated return to the child on screen could be that the child-centred narrative has become a recurring part of Spanish screenwriting. Rob Stone argues that this

is due to their diverging perspective: ‘Spanish filmmakers have frequently couched their dissidence through the alternative viewpoint of children’ (Stone 2002, p. 85). Sarah Wright has linked this to historical memory: ‘Repeatedly, then, Spanish cinema animates the child on screen and in doing so brings alive periods of Spanish history as prosthetic memories’ (2013, p. 18). As I have highlighted, however, there are also current socio-cultural factors that are relevant to the repeated recourse to the child character on Spanish screens, that relate to both the past, present and future. *El laberinto del fauno* (del Toro 2006), *A Monster Calls* (Bayona 2016), *El espíritu de la colmena* (Erice 1973), *El orfanato* (Bayona 2007), *El espinazo del diablo* (del Toro 2001) are all child-centred films with a Spanish connection—be it in diegetic setting or in the production context—that have enjoyed critical acclaim and numerous awards and are all examples which feature periods of Spanish history. Thus, we can begin to build a case for a child orphan character that has specific relevance in the Spanish societal and cinematic contexts.

To return to the rhetoric of trouble that surrounds the child in Spain, in her monograph *The Child in Spanish Cinema*, which incidentally is a key text drawn upon in this thesis, Wright studies the idea of youth as a ‘crisis point’ in contemporary Spanish society. Indeed, recent media storms in the Spanish tabloid press, labelling Spanish youth as *la generación ni-ni*⁶ and as a ‘lost’ generation, have arguably led to a stigmatisation of Spanish youth. Wright considers this notion of youth as a ‘synecdoche’ for crisis in Spanish film (2013, p. 130) and incorporates contextual knowledge of Spanish society’s tendency to view youth, especially adolescence, as a social ‘issue’. We also find youth represented in Spanish cinema that predates the country’s own crisis. Quinqui films such as *El pico* (Eloy de la Iglesia, 1983) and *Deprisa, deprisa* (Saura, 1981) deal with the issues faced by youth characters, a trend that can also be identified in world cinema following *Rebel Without a Cause* (Ray, 1955). Where Nicholas Ray’s film invented the anguished teenager, however, the characters in *Deprisa deprisa*, by contrast, are marginalised by their criminal activity and social exclusion, not by their angst. *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* is also grouped with this genre in Time Out’s list of ‘The 50 best Youth Gone Wild Films’.⁷

Of course, this chronicle of youth-in-crisis is not specific to a Spanish context. Nonetheless, the idea that young people are frequently viewed and portrayed as anti-social is intensified by so-called problems or social issues that Wright also looks at in her study, including the *botellón*,⁸ the extended period that young Spaniards tend to remain in the family home, and the construction of

⁶ A collective term for young people that neither work nor study (hence ni-ni), often used pejoratively.

⁷ On the other hand, anyone (young or old) who was a rebel in the regime era had to some extent to be without an official cause

⁸ Events where groups of young Spaniards gather to drink and socialise outside, often in public spaces.

Spanish youth as a 'lost generation'. This perspective is also interesting if we remember that during *La movida*, in some ways, youth culture became 'official', in the sense that the state almost championed cultural productions.⁹ Socialist mayor of Madrid Enrique Tierno Galván was in office from 1977-1982 and famously supported the cultural changes that the *movida* brought with it. This promotion and encouragement of a largely youth-centred subculture has been interpreted by academics as a way to remake a democratic Spain in the wake of the dictatorship (Stapell 2009, p. 369). This, too, could shed light on Spanish society and culture's past in the co-optation of the child and/or youth figure. In the context of cinematic representation, it is worth mentioning how several of Almodóvar's films that centre on youth and their experience of the movement, including *Pepi, Luci, Bom y otras chicas del montón* (1980) and *La mala educación* (2004), have come to be seen as encapsulating the cultural change occurring in the capital, thereby positioning Almodóvar as a key figure of the period. Alongside this, films including *El calentito* (Chuz Gutiérrez, 2005) also created cinematic dialogue around the subject of youth and counterculture.

It is pertinent, then, to acknowledge these influences as we examine the depictions of youth, the child, and the orphan in the Spanish cinema that is the focus of this thesis. Does the youth figure still speak to a sense of resistance on-screen? What are the implications of these kinds of representations of children in the context of reception? Is it worth reconsidering the limitations of renderings of the child orphan as powerless or lacking in experience? I propose that visual cultures scholarship can unpick these metaphorical layers that encase the child orphan and reconsider the figure's deployment in these fictional narratives, in order to observe changes in treatment by both directors and present-day Spanish society in which these productions are received.

Crucially, this thesis employs an approach that holds the orphan child as unique in its employment in Spanish cinema. It addresses the social contexts that mean the orphan character has a grounding in the realities of the orphan child in contemporary Spanish society. Specific Spanish socio-historical circumstances make the analysis of the orphan particularly relevant in Spanish film studies. Thus, I will summarise here the key contentions of orphan child as specific to a Spanish context. In the first instance, following the Civil War, Spain experienced huge population depletion. Alongside this, Republican orphans were rehomed by the state following the war. They were displaced and sent to Nationalist families, meaning the politicisation of adoption (of anxiety) in Spain. Moreover, as a result of the population depletion the subsequent pro-natalist Francoist policy, Spain was overwrought and possessed a notable preoccupation with children and

⁹According to Silvia Calvo Sanz, 'La Movida Madrileña is a cultural movement that begins after Franco's dictatorship in the 1970s, it started in Madrid city centre and more specifically in the district of Malasaña.' (2017, unpaginated)

growing families. Enduring Catholicism can further be linked to the inflated importance placed upon the heteronormative nuclear family. Finally, the declining birth-rate and economic deprivation of the 21st century are recent environmental factors that influence the distinctive orphan child of Spain and Spanish cinematic reflections of this child.

My investigation focuses on narratives that depict social, political, and cultural change, in which the child orphan encounters a huge range of life experiences. I contemplate the broad spectrum and nuanced representations of the orphan child's navigation of change. Through a consideration of scholarship on the Spanish filmic child from the 1980s onwards, we can see not only how interpretations of orphanhood on-screen have changed, but also how the growing interdisciplinary nature of Hispanic visual cultures has benefited from the advances in the field of Childhood Studies. I inform my cinematic analysis with these theoretical notions. In the first instance, I will now turn to establish the key research questions.

Research Questions

In this research, I re-read four well-known Spanish films to ascertain how the representation of the child orphan has changed in contemporary Spanish visual cultures from the Franco dictatorship to the present. Initially, this thesis asks what these on-screen shifts tell us about the changes in representation of the orphan child figure? Does kinlessness have a special resonance in Spanish cinematic and societal context? Why, in a country such as Spain, where there is a fixation on childlessness, should there again be a turn in film and other visual arts towards the portrayal, not of childlessness, but of children without parents? In their alterity and orphanhood, the child orphan protagonists that I analyse also query conventional and well-worn understandings of the child in Spanish cinema as a motor-helpless onlooker (Martin-Jones 2011, p. 72). In this section, I expand upon these primary questions and outline my three principal research questions.

In child-centred Spanish cinema, the orphan child emerges as particularly important but has not yet been adequately singled out and identified in scholarship. This thesis holds that we must consider the orphan child specifically if we are to rethink stereotypical notions of the child-as-victim. Indeed, when considering the orphan child protagonists of films presented earlier in this chapter, we begin to see a general theme in the cinematic depiction and the scholarship that reflects on these characters. This child is frequently representative of innocence, victimhood and witnessing. Moreover, when employed in dialogues that feature an element of Spanish national history, the child orphan tends to symbolise an overarching sense of loss. Whilst Spain as a country has experienced several societal transformations since the end of the Civil War in 1939, the orphan child character persists across these socio-political shifts. The first key question, then, asks why

the orphan child continues to be a prevalent figure in Spanish cinema? Thus, it also asks what this can tell us about transformations in the politics and ideology around the child and family throughout radical political shifts in the Spanish context from 1962 to 2017?

As I will demonstrate, there exists a great deal of scholarship that reads this iteration of the child character as a vulnerable victim. The narratives that I examine in this thesis will call into question previous scholarship that views the child as a passive spectator or a powerless witness. This thesis wants instead to test the hypothesis that the child orphan is in fact an active social actor, rather than a cypher for adult concerns or a passive victim and thus can also be represented as such. The second fundamental question, then, is, to what extent do orphan children of Spanish film in fact turn away from filling a symbolic value as passive cyphers, as previous scholarship has found, to be legible within discourses about agentic capacity of the child figure? From studying the selected narratives, can we acknowledge the orphan children's potential to be social actors that are also engaged with the socio-political context?

Finally, I argue that we can re-read these filmic texts to recognise forms of agency by applying novel theories from the field of Children's Geography and Childhood Studies. The texts I draw from take original approaches to the child. Through my examination, I ask how the cinematic texts in my corpus yield different conclusions when re-read in the light of these theories. The application of these theoretical paradigms creates key threads that run through all four film case study chapters. I present these theories in detail in this Introduction chapter, as they will be essential as we return to investigate and open up the representation of the orphan protagonists of *Tómbola*, *Cría cuervos*, *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* and *Estiu 1993* respectively. Beforehand, this chapter turns to offer short history of the figure of the child in Spanish film.

A Brief History of the Child in Spanish Cinema

Child-starred cinema has persisted in more than fifty years of Spanish film because it expresses ongoing concerns with the nation's past, present, and future. (Hogan 2018, p. 209)

With the objective of providing a context of the child in Spanish film, this section embarks on a selective, cross-sectional chronological summary of the iterations of the filmic child of Spain, beginning with the Franco era. An overview of the history of child-centred cinema will be a useful foundation on which to build my own analysis.

In cinematic and televisual outputs under the Franco regime, 'the essential social nucleus becomes the family' (Hopewell 1986, p. 16). There was a particular emphasis on the family given the purported values of the dictatorship and Catholicism. The absence of a democratic model and

of social organisation meant that the family unit became overdetermined with the state placing huge importance on the nuclear family. This thesis will later review the impacts of some propagandistic depictions of the idealised family unit on understandings of the child and the orphan. Such a strong emphasis on the nucleus of the family was understandable. The aims of the Franco dictatorship were intertwined with desires to rebuild the ‘great’ Spanish nation, following the casualties and losses of the Spanish Civil War (1936-39). Heteronormative reproduction was encouraged, with financial prizes given to families with 10 or more offspring. In this way, children became broadly associated with futurity and a consolidation of the nation state in Francoist Spain. Naturally, Francoist cinema and television reflected this.¹⁰ Cuadrado has underscored the desire of Francoism to create a centralised and unified country and the ideological role of films like *La gran familia* (Palacios 1962) in aiding this process:

Ante este reto, el Régimen necesitaba espacios a través de los cuales canalizar sus ideales y, de esta forma, el ámbito familiar se convirtió en una de las piezas claves para completar dicha misión. Asimismo, el cine se convirtió en uno de los principales conductos utilizados con el fin de dar a conocer a la sociedad española un modelo de familia fiel al imaginario franquista [sic]

(Faced with this challenge, the Regime needed spaces to channel its ideals, and, in this way, the family sphere became one of the key avenues by which it could achieve this objective. Likewise, cinema became one of the main channels used to present Spanish society with a model of the family faithful to the Francoist imaginary). (Cuadrado 2014, p. 243)

As Faulkner has remarked of the Francoist family-centred film *La gran familia* (Palacios 1962), ‘watching *La gran familia* is like watching a 104-minute version of Franco awarding a prize to the parents of a large family’ (Faulkner 2006, p. 28). Peter William Evans further provides an accurate description of the film as ‘saccharine utopianism’ (Evans 2000, p. 79), underscoring the children’s role in these films as ‘a positive force, helping to cement the relationship of the parents, strengthening the bonds of the family’ (Evans 2000, p. 86). Children play a fundamental role in these familial narratives, and the first chapter of this thesis focuses specifically on one of the *niños prodigios*, or the child stars of this period of Spanish film.

In musical cinema, the *españolada* and the genre of *cine con niño* united to create a generation of Shirley Temple-esque child-stars. Pablito Calvo of *Marcelino, pan y vino* (Vajda 1955), Joselito of *El*

¹⁰ In fact, policies in Spain were similar to those in France, where incentives were given for large families right up until the 80s. And in Spain today there are benefits for the familia numerosa. (See for example Ley 40/2003, protección a las Familias Numerosas.)

pequeño ruiseñor (Amo 1957) and Pepa Flores of the Marisol films all became household names in Franco-era Spain. As Hogan has outlined,

The cine con niño showcased the Andalusian mould of Spanishness, replete with flamenco song and dance numbers that exceptionally talented children, known as niños prodigios, performed. (Hogan 2011, p. 2)

Undeniably, child-centred Spanish film, or *cine con niño*, established itself as a leading genre of cinema in the 1950s. Of note is the fact that all three of these aforementioned film protagonists are orphans. The diegetic emphasis in these orphan-centred narratives is on the child's search for reunification with the family units. Marcelino, for example, desires to be reunited with his deceased mother. Wright has noted that in many films of the period 'boys were often longing for their absent or dead mothers' (2013, p. 24). By all official accounts there were very few orphan children in Spain, or perhaps that there was no formal recognition of such an identity, Wright points out that we still find the trope of the orphan in Francoist cinema. 'By 1955 the orphan was no longer a socio-historical reality, but the rhetoric of the child orphan and the child martyr continued to hold sway' (Wright 2013, p. 24).

Following the Civil War, many Spanish families had been torn apart by the conflict. Children who were orphaned, especially those from Republican families, were sent to state-run orphanages under the *Auxilio Social* scheme or adopted by pro-Francoist families deemed acceptable by the state. Luz C. Souto points out that, following the release of a surge of documentaries, including *Els nens perduts de franquisme* (2002), scholars in great number were attracted to the study of the unknown destination of more than 40,000 children during the early years of the dictatorship. As she argues, investigative documentaries reignited 'el interés por el estudio de la infancia en el contexto de la guerra y la posguerra' (interest in the study of childhood in the context of war and post-war) (Souto 2016, p. 269). This, however, is a relatively recent phenomenon in Memory Studies, Sociology, and Hispanic Studies. In these early years of Francoism, the children were displaced and re-homed; the state changed the identities of and relocated thousands of orphaned children of Republican descent. Processes of indoctrination were carried out in the state orphanages and within the family homes alike to re-educate Republican children to indoctrinate them with the 'correct' Francoist values. With this knowledge, then, we can already note the amalgamation of values assigned to the orphan child by the regime. For the regime, these orphan

children were docile bodies, symbolic of the future of the strong Francoist state, their re-education and the steering of their growth then being of fundamental importance.¹¹

Lorraine Ryan (2009, p. 245) builds on the aforementioned analysis by Wright and Souto as she considers the presentation of the adorable performing orphan of the *españolada* musicals. She notes that this disappearance of orphans from Spanish society is a result of the state's reconversion policy. 'Supposed orphans were being taken in by religious orders, which also led to a huge increase in these orphans becoming seminarists' (2009, p. 245). Ryan further notes that the Francoist state was determined to annihilate Republican families through a brutal campaign of vengeance involving legalised separation of children and parents, and zealous National Catholicism (2009, p. 246). In this way, the representation of the Church and religious figures as the saving grace of Republican children in these films has some grounding in reality, for example, in the Joselito films generally, and in *Marcelino, pan y vino* (Ladislao Vajda 1954) in particular. Peter Anderson explores the idea of orphan children as martyrs, remarking 'this is why the children of the dead were often cited as symbolizing the pride of the 'race' and the salvation of Spain for Christianity and civilization' (2011, p. 363). For the purposes of this research, is it useful to note the way that children became intrinsic to this concept of nation and population building, especially after the loss of life in Spain following the Civil War. In other words, this kind of over importance placed on natalist policies meant that the child has been enveloped in symbolism in Spanish history.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, a new child-centred cinematic trend surfaced. Directors including Saura, Erice, and Borau, shared formative years at the Escuela Oficial de Cine (Official Cinema School). Thematic continuity of their work can largely be described as a concern with addressing political and historical traumas of the recent past. Directors such as Saura played 'off an external influence – history – against an internal mechanism – memory' (Hopewell, p. 87). A key factor of their cinematic works is the inclusion of the child character, in many cases employed to address traumatic memory or call-up national allegories during the closing years of the Franco regime. Kinder (1983) has described the aforementioned directors as the 'Children of Franco', mainly due to her argument that through their films they call up their own childhoods under the dictatorship. Films including *La prima Angélica* (Saura 1974), *El espíritu de la colmena* (Erice 1973) and *El sur* (Erice 1983) interweave themes of (apocryphal) orphanhood, exploratory play and childhood subjectivities to present a discourse about growing up under the regime. Drawing on nuanced symbolism and oneiric cinematographic sequences, the films of these directors earned

¹¹ I employ the term docile bodies as subjects of power structures, as defined in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Foucault 1979, p.135)

the title of *cine de la oposición*, even while cinematic censorship was still a constant in the industry. Orphanhood on the cinema screen, then, was utilized by directors including Saura to represent Spain as a country lacking an authority figure during the transition to democracy in the early 70s.

Many of Spanish society's contemporary fears relating to the loss of, or otherness of, the child manifest themselves in recent Spanish horror. This iteration of the orphan child functions both to uphold and destabilise traditional notions of childhood. Pramaggiore, in a comparative study of Spain and Uruguay, has also pointed out that:

Dictatorship and its complex aftermath, in addition to rapid secularization, declining birth-rates and increasing immigration, characterize the political economy of both Spain and Uruguay and play a role in the discourse of children in horror. (2017, unpaginated)

Of course, the use of children as uncanny figures is not something strictly specific to Spanish-language horror film. We have seen the horrifying child in a plethora of films globally throughout the history of the horror film. In the Spanish context, however, the eerie, sometimes monstrous, child character articulates contemporary societal fears around the social, political, cultural and economic changes taking place in the country, triggered by the end of the Franco regime. We see these themes in recent films including *El orfanato* (Bayona 2007), and *Verónica* (Plaza 2017), where, of course, historical memory of the Franco regime is touched upon. *El orfanato*, for example, makes reference to orphanages and the *auxilio social* state-run orphanages and *los niños robados del franquismo* in its portrayal of missing and disappeared children.

The child also reappears in films of the Spanish memory boom genre, or what Hogan has labelled the 'nuevo cine con niño' (Hogan 2018). Films including *La lengua de las mariposas* (Cuerda 1999), *El viaje de Carol* (Uribe 2002), *Pa negre*, (Villaronga 2010) and *Secretos del corazón* (Armendáriz 1997) possess clear echoes of the child we saw in cinema of the transition period. We find fewer instances of allegory, symbolism, and surrealism in these films from the late 90s and 2000s, however, than we do in the transition-era films. These films treat the subject of the Spanish Civil War through a lens of nostalgia and portray melancholy moments of childhood. Faulkner has made the case for a number of these films to be viewed as falling under the category of a didactic 'middlebrow cinema' (2013, pp. 252-253), whose aim is to teach audiences about the past. Similarly, Thomas remarks that in the films of this category, the child is deployed as a tool for 'nostalgic ends and didactic purposes' (2017, p. 147), and that they consequently deal with history and childhood at a superficial level. If we consider the character of Moncho in *La lengua de las mariposas* (José Luis Cuerda 1999), whom we view in classroom scenes and the family home, he is always watching, his inquisitive gaze and pondering silence marking out his role as spectator. We see how

he becomes paralysed and unable to help his Republican tutor, as he is carted away in the final scenes of the film. Thomas points to this as a clear lack of subjective autonomy. ‘In such a framing, however, these...films offer an image of the child instrumentalized as object rather than invested with autonomy as subject’ (Thomas 2017, p. 147). This is a pertinent claim for the research that this thesis embarks on, as I will seek to investigate the ways in which stereotypical presentations of orphanhood and the child can be deconstructed by considering nuanced modes of representation, agency, and play. I tend to agree with scholarship from Faulkner (2013) and Thomas (2017) that articulate the somewhat simplistic, heavy-handed use of the (orphan) child protagonists in these films to filter the violence and polarisation of the Civil War through the eyes of the child. For this reason, this thesis examines a range of cinematic historical representations and time periods, moving away from solely the domain of Civil War themed film. In the following section I offer an overview of the current field of scholarship.

Literature Review

To indicate where this thesis will be situated in the wider field of literature on the child in Spanish cinema, this section will offer a brief overview of the topic. Firstly, it is vital to mention the relatively recent boom of academic interest in childhood in cinema and the developing and dynamic field of Childhood Studies, with which the analysis carried out in this thesis will itself intersect. In recent years, the field of Childhood Studies has grown to be increasingly interdisciplinary, as scholars seek out contemporary multimedia sources to test their arguments and dissect the effects of the changing world on established understandings of childhood. This can be seen in the upsurge in the number of recent conferences and research networks including the Childhood and Nation in World Cinema project and the Children’s History Society.¹² Contemporary academic journals are now publishing issues focused solely on the perception and understanding of the child in modern times—see for example *The Queer Child Now and its Paradoxical Effects* (Stockton 2016)—and the recent call for submissions for ‘The Forum for Modern Language Studies Prize 2019’, that invited submissions on the subject of Literature and Childhood.¹³ The growing interest in the figure of the child, both sociologically and within fictional narratives, and the creation of research networks and journals centred on this common ground, enables Hispanic studies scholars and academics in Childhood Studies to engage productively in joint work and to stimulate novel research.¹⁴

¹² See <<https://www.histchild.org/>> and <<http://childnationcinema.org/>>

¹³ See <https://academic.oup.com/fmls/pages/the_forum_prize>

¹⁴ See Noble (2011), Rocha and Semiet (2012), Ryan (2012), Wright (2013) and Randall (2017).

As this chapter has demonstrated, the child character has repeatedly been employed by directors seeking to depict historical and national conflict. In the Spanish case, we see a clear example of this in cinema of the ‘memory boom’ in which the child protagonist is used repeatedly to articulate the effect of the traumatic memories of the Spanish Civil War. This, in turn, is considered in the scholarship, which has tended to examine the child character’s allegorical expression of national trauma and memory. Two authors have published works in the 1980s discussing the child seer in the films of Carlos Saura: Marsha Kinder (1983) and John Hopewell (1986). In recent years, and perhaps thanks in part to the development of the interdisciplinary research network ‘Childhood and Nation in World Cinema’, literature on the child in Spanish cinema has flourished.¹⁵ Seminal contributions have been made by Sarah Wright (2017), Erin Hogan (2020), and Sarah Thomas (2019). In parallel, Rachel Randall (2017), Debbie Martin (2019) and Geoff Maguire (2018) have deepened the study of the child in Latin American cinema. These academics, in the study of Hispanic visual cultures, have produced critically engaged scholarship that has encouraged a re-reading of Hispanic fictional narratives, one that moves away from entrenched understandings of the child figure as a motor-helpless onlooker (Martin-Jones 2011, p. 72).¹⁶ This growing body of work is itself testament to the important value set upon investigating the child of Ibero-american visual cultures.

The relationship of the child and national (traumatic) memories is studied in detail by Sarah Wright in *The Child in Spanish Cinema* (2016). Wright tracks the evolution of the child character from religious Spanish cinema of the 1950s, the child’s act of witnessing in ‘art-house horror’, through to the youth figure’s engagement with memory politics in more contemporary films. Wright’s study situates the films in the socio-historical context and exposes the ways in which depicting Spain’s cinematic child emerges as a method for directors and spectators to reframe perceptions of the past. The book explores the child’s propensity to call up traumatic spectres of the past in films including *El orfanato* (Bayona 2007) and *Camino* (Fesser 2008), and also the ‘enduring image of the child as symbol for the future’ (p. 154). Wright further highlights the fact that in a great deal of ‘memory boom’ cinema, ‘the child ushers in a generational matrix and may be figured frequently as a metaphorical or literal orphan’ (p. 93). Undoubtedly, the child orphan character, in its frequent figurations, has become a visual shorthand for the loss of a (mostly Republican) generation following the Civil War. My own analysis will consider the child orphan as positioned within the landscape of memory politics in contemporary Spain, specifically in Serrador’s *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* As Wright turns her analytical focus to the depiction of the

¹⁵ For more information, see <<http://childnationcinema.org/>>

¹⁶ See Ryan (2012); Rocha and Seminet (2012); Thomas (2014) and Fehimović (2015)

orphan child witness in films including *El espíritu de la colmena* (Erice 1973) and *La lengua de las mariposas* (Cuerda, 1999), she begins to articulate a key question. Does the gaze of the orphan child imply an innocent witnessing? And furthermore, does the cinematic child's overlapping with memory indicate a preoccupation with the recent national past? Can the inclusion of the child protagonist instead be viewed as a cinematic 'working through' of historical memory? Crucially, Wright argues that 'the cinematic child, then, does not necessarily suggest a politics of victimhood in representations of the past, but can imply critical engagement and confrontation' (2016, p. 157). This potential for critical engagement and confrontation is something this thesis will seek to explore. Does it make sense to load memory responsibility onto the child vessel, still forming his/her earliest memories? This thesis attempts to move away from these permutations of these archetypes of the child character as 'seer' or vessel for memory. I will assess whether theories of Children's Geography and Childhood Studies offer potential readings for the Spanish cinematic child that shift away from such a politics of victimhood and/or ventriloquism.

Ventriloquism, or the child as an ideological mouthpiece, is an idea that Hogan documents in *The Two cines con niño* (2018). The author also coins the term *nuevo cine con niño* to categorise the wave of Spanish memory boom films that again co-opted the child figure to articulate and address often painful historical memory. Wright and Hogan agree that the surge of 'memory boom' cinema calls for a new labelling of this specific wave of child-centred cinema, or *cine con niño*. Hogan's monograph has also contributed useful analysis to the field of child-centred film scholarship. Importantly, the book questions the extent to which child protagonists of Spanish cinema can 'speak' in the narratives. Initially, Hogan traces the child in the cine con niño that originated in the Franco period, a cinema that frequently turns to an appropriative use of the child. Later though, Hogan in fact explores how queer children in films like *Pa negre* (2010) and *Urte Ilunak* (1992) problematise the trope of the innocent child. She notes how the ghostly gay children of the films embody a kind of alterity that opens the door for the children to assert agency in their rejection of societal expectations. My research will aim to build on this reading and further recognise the potential for agency in the alterity of the protagonists. I consider the limitations of the heteronormative, nuclear family structure that the transgressive girlhoods and orphanhoods we find in the narratives can in fact resist.

Further to the previous point, Sarah Thomas has contributed a focused study of the presence of children in cinema released during the Spanish transition to democracy in her book *Inhabiting the In-between* (2019). Her scholarly exploration opens with a consideration of Serrador's provocative *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* (Ibáñez Serrador 1976). In its examination of this chilling film, in which the children murder the adults, the introduction notes how traditional childhood

tropes of innocence are turned upside down on-screen. Thomas argues that these filmic children, and others found in cinema of the transition to democracy, resist existing scholarly categorisation to some extent. That is to say, they differ from the *niños prodigios* of the 1950s Francoist cine con niño genre (Pablito Calvo and Marisol) and also from the child witnesses we find employed in memory boom cinema. The youths we find in transition cinema, she argues, are hybrid children that speak to the 'in-between' flux of this socio-political shift. Perhaps most pertinently for this research, Thomas' book closes on a comparative exploration of the in-between navigated by the protagonists of *Cría cuervos* and *Estiu 1993*. These filmic texts also make up two of the case studies of this thesis. Thomas' analysis is insightful in that she demonstrates the liminal, in-between transitions that are experienced by the orphan child protagonists of the films. I will consider this and further explore the potential for transgressive agency of the orphan child in my own interrogation of the films. Notably, Thomas also expands on how many children in these films of the transition oscillate between manifestations of the self and the other, the object and the subject. In other words, Thomas is critical of the tendency of directors to collapse adult/child perspectives and subjectivities into one. She claims that 'this shift is problematic in that the child can become co-opted for adult ends and deprived of subjectivity and agency' (2019, p. 112).

Undoubtedly, it is difficult to unearth the child's perspective when the majority of these cultural outputs are created by adults. Can children make cinema, and, if they can, what would it be like?¹⁷ Is the apparatus of cinema a bar to child participation, or, on the other hand, is the very adult business of cinema a form of playacting and fantasy? There is an argument to be considered though, in that through the incorporation of the child figure in the films that make up this study, the filmmakers give voice to the child. Fundamentally, Thomas posits that framing events from a child's point of view can in fact lead to a productive reconsideration:

Despite the dangers of collapsing the subjective differences between adults and children, focalizing the events of a film through a child's perspective can also lead adult spectators to consider from an ethical or empathetic standpoint the child's difference in agency as well as his or her bodily or emotional realities, and how these are different from the adult's. (2019, p. 112)

It is at this point where my own analysis can engage productively with Thomas's reading. She and I share the objective of reframing our approach to children's agency. Where Thomas concentrates primarily on films released during Spain's 'long transition to democracy', I extend the parameters

¹⁷ In the case of Mark Cousins' film, *The First Movie* (2011) the filmmaker and producer are adults, however they let the children they meet in Kurdistan make, direct and star in the film. Cousins brings a film projector to show films to the children in Kurdish Iraq and also gives them three high-definition cameras to use themselves.

to 1950s and 2010s cinema and television. It is my contention that the orphan child is able at once to form part of narratives that reflect on socio-historical change and also to access narrative and social agency.

In addition, it is worth highlighting Emma Wilson's book on the child in film. In her groundbreaking work *Cinema's Missing Children*, Wilson considers the tendency to represent the missing child in filmic narratives with the cinematic desire to

[M]obilise questions about the protection and innocence of childhood, about parenthood and the family, about the past (as childhood is constructed in retrospect as nostalgic space of safety) and about the future (as fears for children reflect anxiety about the inheritance left to future generations). (2003, p. 2)

Although Wilson makes these assertions about Western, European cinematic outputs generally, I maintain that these reflections on the use of the missing child have a special resonance in the Spanish cinematic context. Even in the very literal sense, we find that the term *la generación perdida* crops up constantly in Spanish media. Sometimes it is used to refer to *Los niños robados del franquismo*, at others to focus on *la generación ni-ni* as a generation of youth lost due to the economic status of post-crisis Spain. I have previously highlighted how the missing child of Spanish cinema may also refer to the rapidly declining birth-rate in Spain. If we consider narratives in which the child is missing, one well-known Spanish cinematic example is Almodóvar's *Todo sobre mi madre* (Almodóvar 1999). The child, Esteban, is struck down by a car and dies in early scenes in the film but his absence is underscored throughout the film's diegesis.¹⁸ In her exploration of the story, Wilson notes that 'the film creates an elegy to the lost, symbiotic relations between mother and son' (Wilson 2003, p. 74). The film does deal with the death and loss of a child specifically. Wilson's writing encourages a consideration of the missing child in a broad-spectrum and the relevance that this has in a Spanish society that still tends to place great value on family and children. Wilson's work is useful when considering my own approach, as her writing contextualises cinematic representations of the missing child with actual societal fears and considers the psychology of concerns about threats to, or the loss of the child, in the Western world.

While there is now a growing wealth of literature available in the field of Hispanic studies that considers child-centred, *cine con niño*, fewer articles and books have been published that look

¹⁸ The main character of the film, Esteban, is gay. He is killed early in the narrative in a car accident. In his book *The Celluloid Closet*, Vito Russo examines the representation of homosexual characters in an array of Hollywood film. Russo sets out how various homosexual characters have been presented as bad guys, victims, and frequently we are shown their deaths. In order to serve a concept of heterosexual normativity, homosexuality in many films is presented as an ill and, in many iterations, a self-hatred is depicted, and the characters meet an unhappy ending. We can apply such a reading here to the death of the homosexual youth character in Almodóvar's film.

specifically at contemporary constructions of youth and the orphan. It is true that, as Randall and Maguire point out, numerous scholars have explored child characters' representation in visual cultures and have looked at them as 'national allegories'; as 'intercessions' in national 'memory wars'; and at the cinematic techniques used to evoke childhood subjectivity and 'the potential of the child subject to enact critiques of class and gender expectations' (2018, p. 6). Nonetheless, I advance the argument that the identity of orphanhood and current depictions and understandings of the orphan child in the Spanish context have been somewhat overlooked in scholarship in the realm of Hispanic Studies. The orphan represents a unique kind of child that calls into question conventional assumptions about childhood itself.

If we are to consider the scholarship that does exist on the orphan child in Hispanic visual cultures, we find contributions to the literature from Dan Russek, Jessamy Harvey, and Stuart Davis in the form of a book chapter and journal articles. Russek's work is a study of the representation of orphanhood in recent Mexican cinema (2012). The author investigates the metaphorical function of orphanhood. Firstly, looking at Buñuel's *Los olvidados* (1950), Russek asserts that orphanhood frequently manifests itself as a 'cultural rubric or pattern' to evoke 'situations of abandonment and helplessness' (p. 136). Russek later shows how, in two films from Eimbcke, traditional tropes of orphanhood are subverted. Instead of recycling such tropes, Eimbcke's filmic children are not merely victims of their environment. He maintains that Eimbcke features the personal trajectories of the child orphan characters, whilst referencing the metaphorical portrayal of orphanhood offered by Buñuel. Russek develops an analysis that shows how, in the films of his study, cinematic orphanhood is not always restricted to the metaphor of loss. In this thesis, I expand and develop this kind of approach in my close reading of sources.

A further example of scholarly work on orphanhood in Spanish language cinema is the work of Jessamy Harvey, who presents a study of death and the adorable orphan, with a focus on *Marcelino pan y vino* (Vajda 1955) and subsequent remakes (Harvey 2004). Harvey focuses principally on the ideological function of the orphan figure in this kind of religious cinema. She looks in detail at the way that the story depicts the death of the adorable child figure in the first cinematic iteration. Harvey's study highlights how, in the 1991 animated film adaptation, Marcelino is able to narrate his own story and consequently turns away from the patriarchal family structure. In a like manner to my own thesis, Harvey situates this turn within the sociological realm and notes a societal shift that argued for children to be understood as social actors that also shape their own circumstances. For example, Harvey notes that, in the 1991 remake of *Marcelino*, 'allowing Marcelino to tell his own story reflects a cultural shift in the way we understand the child' and that the film

‘demonstrates a highly critical attitude to patriarchal familial strategy, where children are crucial for the family's perpetuation, instead of being valued in themselves’ (2004, p. 72).

This kind of reading has been stimulating for my own analysis in that it considers the idea of children being valued for themselves alongside the cultural shifts that are reflected through cinema. It will also be helpful to contemplate the child in Latin American Spanish language cinema as a useful parallel, for example Debbie Martin's study of the child's potential for agency. In particular, Martin's reading of *La vendedora de las rosas* (Victor Gaviria, 1998) is enlightening. She argues that in many films the child is employed as allegory, and that any representation of the child's agency is excluded. *La vendedora*, however, affords its child protagonists an agency, according to Martin. The analysis explores how the director's use of improvisation, errors in the children's language, camerawork, and position work to represent the child's agency. Imperfections and the freedom to improvise are representative of some agency on the part of child actors. This in turn begs another question: does the agency then belong to the child or to the child as actor? In a like manner, Martin claims that Gaviria is successful in creating a ‘polyphonic text’ in which the child's ‘body, agency and living-ness’ is not entirely colonised by adults (Martin 2011, p.271). My thesis takes this idea, this possibility inherent in film, to recognise the child as a social actor that participates and acts, and applies it in the form of a multimodal analysis. Where Martin focuses on Latin American cultural productions, I submit the Spanish films that make up my corpus to a similar multifaceted examination. It is clear, then, that existing academic work on the (orphan) child is beginning to look towards potential for agency and, is itself transforming in line with Childhood Studies. In the next section, I set out my key research questions of the thesis.

Critical Approach

Applying a historicist and sociological approach, this thesis will look to explore depictions of the orphan child in Spanish screen cultures and their relation to varying attitudes to the child orphan, beginning in Chapter One with Franco-era representations of the orphan child and moving through to more recent productions. In order to unpack the question of why the orphan child continues to feature in Spanish cinema, and to discern whether there has been a shift towards a recognition of the child figure as an agentive social actor, the methodological approach takes the form of a close analysis with socio-historical approach. In part inspired by the approach employed in the book edited by Álvaro Rodríguez Díaz, *España en su cine: Aprendiendo sociología con películas españolas* (2015), my approach blends a historicist and sociological approach, to unpack and observe the social changes and attitudes towards the child orphan from the Franco regime to contemporary Spanish society. As Díaz sets out:

[C]ine suministra esa posibilidad de conocer las vidas ajenas de nuestra época, al ser un espejo de lo social, al reflejar estereotipos servicios para aprender a situarnos.

(Cinema offers that chance to experience the lives of others, by acting as a social mirror, reflecting stereotypes so we can learn to situate our own experience.)
(2015, p. 11)

The Spanish cinema analysed in this study is more than a mirror that reflects; rather, it interprets and intervenes. For this reason, this thesis takes a flexible sociological approach with historical context at the core, but also brings in sociological theory from the fields of Childhood Studies and Children's Geography. I use these theories to nuance my analysis because they often offer ways to reconsider traditional understandings of children. This will assist in the exposition of my hypothesis which supposes that we can reframe preconceived clichés that surround the orphan child on screen.

On the validity of this approach, it is further worth noting that the study of visual cultures is related also to the visualisation of culture more generally: our interaction as a society seems to be with screens and images now more than text. Nicholas Mirzoeff's work, for example, develops key theories behind the study and importance of analysing visual cultures. As he points out in his introduction to visual cultures, 'modern life takes place on screen' (Mirzoeff 2009, p. 1). This thesis attempts to 'see in Spanish', to study the image of the orphan child and look at sociological change, to examine how 'identities are being forged or being taken apart through a dialogue with visual cultures' (Prout 2011, p.xv).

In the chapters that make up this thesis, I locate the child orphan character within the socio-historical context of the time period in which the film is set. This study, throughout each chapter, traces the changing presentation of the orphan protagonist(s). I offer a sustained close reading of key scenes and elements of the respective films to draw parallels and detect representations of the orphan child that are common to several films from different genres. And as part of my examination, I consider how the *mise-en-scène* is employed in portraying the child and their world. Furthermore, the chapters delve into contextual analysis and dissect the broader historical, cultural, and social contexts of the films.

With the idea of tracing the shifting representations of the orphan child over time, I have selected films that span across political and cultural shifts in Spanish national history. The films selected for analysis were released over six decades from the Franco regime until present-day. Each text also possesses a contemporary relevance. The Marisol films all received a new release cycle in the early 2000s, which 'bears testament to the renewed interest in Marisol since the turn of the

century' (Wright 2013, p. 61). *Cría cuervos* (1976) is still one of Saura's most acclaimed works and continues to feature on festival circuits and is circulated and promoted in the UK frequently by the BFI. *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* has become something of an international cult film among connoisseurs of the horror genre, even leading to a remake in 2012 entitled *Come Out and Play* (Makinov, 2012). Finally, *Estiu 1993* (Simón 2017) was released in 2017 and considers the consequences of the recent AIDS crisis of 1980s Spain, namely the impact on children and families. It is also important to highlight that in my analysis of *Estiu 1993* I include excerpts from semi-structured interviews with the Director of Photography of the film and outreach workers from non-profit HIV/AIDS social entities in Barcelona. I chose to include this methodology in this chapter due to the relative lack of scholarship of the film as a recent output. The interviews undertaken provided insight on the creation of the film and also the social reality of the AIDS crisis and its aftereffects in Spanish society. I designed the interviews as semi-structured and open ended with the goal of generating qualitative data and furthering my knowledge of both the cinematography and of the socio-historical context of the film. Findings from these interviews are included to support various sections of my close reading within the chapter. By including an interview with the Director of Photography Santiago Racaj, I am able to include and draw on knowledge and some of the thinking behind visual sequences and camera angles and shots.

As outlined previously, I employ several key theoretical areas to open up my examinations. I do so with a view to considering the depiction of the child as orphan and how each film acknowledges and represents the orphaned status of the child protagonist(s). The first of these theoretical threads is the concept of Magical Thinking. This concept was coined by Hispanist Sarah Thomas. 'Thomas defines Magical Thinking as the child's turn to the 'imaginative realm to negotiate alternative forms of agency' (2014, p. 59). I advance this notion of Magical Thinking in my reading of the orphan child characters and their recourse to the world of imagination in order to demonstrate how imaginative practices can be an empowering source. The acknowledgment of the powerful potential in this kind of imaginative realm will be crucial in detecting alternative forms of agency in the actions of the child character.

I study the child's relationship to space and how they inhabit and move through different social domains and literal spaces. The period of childhood itself is a liminal, transitional state and this informs my reading as I propose that the social and literal spaces and domains occupied by the child character merit a focused investigation. Within this consideration of space, I highlight areas occupied by the orphan character and how these spaces lend themselves to resistance and resilience. Supported by detailed analysis of key scenes from my filmic sources, I look at the orphan child's movement, literal and symbolic spaces, use of transport, and the place, or rather the setting

of the films where the action transpires. I further apply Rachel Randall's conception of the playspace, looking at the space of play and playspace as a heterotopia (2015, p. 215). I draw on theories from Children's Geography, principally the concept of spatial agency, which asserts that 'agency exists within and between the spaces where children's lives happen' (Hackett, Procter and Seymour 2015, p. 1).

To this end, and thirdly, I investigate play and how the orphan child characters use the transformative potential of play as a means of exerting their own agency. The concept of play and its relationship to the developmental processes of childhood have long been the focus of child psychologists and sociologists. D.W. Winnicott, for example, has provided some foundational studies on the power of play (1971). I use knowledge of these theories to closely examine scenes of play and playfulness in the films studied in this thesis. I posit that, through an acknowledgement of playing practices and their transformative potential, we can upend conventional notions of the powerlessness and loss that is frequently thought to be intrinsic to orphanhood. Furthermore, I study the socio-dramatic function of play, in which children act out scenes and scripts in their role playing. I apply this to how the filmic orphan protagonists play out memories so they can navigate and better understand the events of their past. Play offers a chance for radical reframing and a realm from which the orphan child draws strength.

The critical approach I have outlined here forms the analytic structure of each chapter of the thesis. These concepts will be essential in presenting an illuminating examination that opens up the orphan protagonists to novel analysis. In the following section, I summarise the analytic structure and content of each individual case study chapter.

Chapter Outline

The thesis is structured in chronological order in line with the dates when the films were released: *Tómbola* (Lucía 1962) *Cría cuervos* (Saura 1976), *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* (Serrador 1976) and *Estiu 1993* (Simón 2017). The films are of diverse style and genre but all feature orphan child protagonists. Overall, the chapters trace the evolution of well-established *cine con niño* genre that was so prevalent during the Franco regime (1939-1975) and that experienced a rebirth as part of the New Spanish Cinema movement under Franco. The focus then turns to horror film and explores the depiction of the orphan child within a film of this genre. Finally, this thesis examines the inclusion of the orphan child character in a film that is set in 1990s Spain.

In the first chapter, Re-reading Marisol: The Power of Puppets and the Orphan Child of *Tómbola* (Lucía 1962), I examine the character of Marisol (Pepa Flores) in the film *Tómbola*, to

interrogate the ostensible propagandistic function of the orphan child in a film that promoted many of the regime's familial values. The chapter asks to what extent this depiction of the 'adorable' performing child orphan adheres to notions of the passive or voiceless child. My analysis takes into account the child star's experience behind the scenes and how she came to form a part of the country's project of modernisation. I deemed it necessary also to acknowledge the lead actor Pepa Flores' experience of abuse and manipulation briefly, as it is important that such instances of abuse are discussed, and we learn from these terrible exploitations and recognise them as we study film. The chapter then applies the first theoretical thread of Magical Thinking. I review Marisol's harnessing of imaginative practices and the forms of Magical Thinking that enable her to negotiate with and resist the hegemonic adult forces of power and control that envelop parts of her world. I then move to consider the character's experience of space and liminality. The analysis looks at Marisol's movement through literal and symbolic spaces and the modes of transport she utilizes. I also consider how Marisol simultaneously projects and critiques notions of 'correct' girlhood and womanhood that were promoted by the regime. This chapter asks the question as to whether we can begin to detect versions of the agentive orphan child if we return to and re-read the Marisol films, like *Tómbola*, that have so often been viewed as solely propagandistic, Francoist films, or popular Spanish film of the Viejo Cine Español (Faulkner 2013, p. 81)

Chapter Two considers whether the gaze of child orphan Ana (Ana Torrent) in *Cría cuervos* dismantles traditional patriarchal family structures and presents spectators with an agentive child character. Furthermore, I offer an examination of the presence of photographs in the film and reflect on how the family photograph can be seen to underscore the simulacrum represented by the family unit. My analysis looks at how childhood and orphanhood are often viewed as periods of inferiority and that Ana's gaze calls these notions into question. Following on from this, the chapter explores how the orphan child's relationship with death constitutes a deviation from stereotypical notions of victimhood and witnessing we have seen previously associated with the orphan in Spanish cinema. Finally, the analytical examination turns to the child's encountering of space, both literal and symbolic. I look at the playspace as a heterotopia and consider how play and movement in specific spaces speak to the potential agency of the orphan child character.

Following this, Chapter Three focuses on the reclaiming of agency in *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* (Serrador 1976) and studies the group of orphan children in Serrador's iconic horror film. As with the previous chapters, the investigation begins with a brief foray into the historical context. As the film was released in the same year as *Cría cuervos*, I offer an alternative contextual historical focus on the declining birth-rate in Spain, Spain as an orphaned nation and also the mistreatment and displacement of children as a consequence of Civil War and fascist regime Spain. Subsequently,

I consider the child orphan in this film as monstrous, uncanny and other. The chapter contemplates how this otherness permits the child orphan a kind of agency within the narrative. I look at how the children on the island of Almanzora subvert the hierarchy of adult-child relations, presented cinematically as a force of nature to offer a radical, alternative version of society. I elected to include a film from the horror genre as we have so frequently seen the depiction of the monstrous orphan child in *cine de terror* and horror films from across the globe.

Finally, Chapter Four concentrates on *Estiu 1993* (Simón, 2017) and explores the orphan at play. Within the chapter, I present the protagonist Frida's (Laia Artigas) use of Magical Thinking. Following this, I study the representation and structures of Catalan and Spanish families. I then move to look at one of the theoretical through lines of the thesis: the concept of play and how Frida's ludic practices present her with a form of agency. It is in this chapter that I support my analysis with interview data collected from discussions with Director of Photography (DoP) Santiago Racaj and with outreach workers from Barcelona-based organisations SIDA STUDI and Creación Positiva. I am therefore able to provide important socio-political and historical context about the HIV/AIDS crisis as it was felt in Spain in the 1980s and 1990s. Furthermore, the DoP's insights on cinematography means I can present a detailed and sustained analysis of key visual sequences buttressed by these insights.

I have provided a broad picture of the varying representations of the (orphan) child in Spanish visual cultures from the dictatorship until present day in order to contextualise the analysis that will follow. I inform my analysis with relevant insights from Childhood Studies. As this chapter has outlined, it is possible to identify various shifts in the representation of the orphan child in Spanish cultural outputs. Moreover, it has demonstrated the need to encourage readings that do not only focus on the allegorical function of the orphan figure but move to include examinations of child subjectivity and agency.

The aim of this research is to examine shifts in these depictions. It will take into account socio-political factors including the impact of the ending of the Franco regime, the transition to democracy, the AIDS crisis in Spain, youth at a crisis point, changing demographics and how these have all shaped fictional cinematic and televisual portrayals of the orphan. This analytical approach is informed by the assertion of Rodríguez Díaz that 'ninguna corriente cinematográfica, temática o modo de hacer cine podrían separarse del entorno sociológica que le envuelve' (no cinematographic trend, style or way of making cinema can be separated from the sociological environment that surrounds it) (Rodríguez Díaz 2015, p. 11). By looking at the shifts in the depiction of the child orphan figure in Spanish film, we can reflect on changing societal attitudes

and do so without making the child merely a mirror of those developments and transitions. Where the characters in my texts will play a part in directors' socio-political objectives and address social issues in their work, the reading offered in this thesis suggests that these films can be considered as part of a third *cine con niño* genre, one made for the child's benefit, perhaps better phrased as *cine sobre el niño*.

Chapter One: Re-reading Marisol: The Power of Puppets and the Orphan Child of *Tómbola* (Lucia 1962)

‘Marisol can also be read now as a raucous, assertive child.’

(Evans 2004, p. 129)

The instantly recognisable makeup of the girl who has come to be known as Marisol is the iconic face of the *cine con niño*. Pepa Flores, the actress behind the persona, has had a turbulent relationship with the Spanish film industry since her first foray into showbusiness. Her adorable, angelic look and impressive vocal ability are quintessential elements of the extensive corpus comprising the musical Marisol films. The 20 films in which she featured were released theatrically between 1960 – 1985. Alongside Joselito and Pablito Calvo, Marisol has been defined as one of the *niños prodigios del cine español* (Aguilar 2013, p. 151). Among the titles that make up this extensive catalogue, the focus here is on *Tómbola* as a film as it exemplifies key characteristics of the orphan child and has a particular focus on the school setting. This chapter analyses Marisol’s depiction as the orphan child protagonist in the 1962 film *Tómbola* (Lucia 1962). I use a close reading of specific scenes informed by the key analytical threads of the thesis: Magical Thinking, spatial agency, and play, as outlined in the Introduction chapter. Through these conceptual frameworks, taken from Children’s Geography and Childhood Studies, I illuminate the presentation of the child orphan with explicit focus on her harnessing of agency in this film.

The plot of *Tómbola* initially centres around the adventures of Marisol and her classmates in the settings of the school and the countryside. When Marisol’s friend and classmate María Belén (Joëlle Rivero), appears to go missing, Marisol raises the alarm, and the search begins. Thanks to Marisol’s exaggeration and theatrical panicking, she is joined by the army and community forces who join the search party. Foreshadowing the kidnapping of Marisol by a band of criminals later in the narrative, the film’s audience comes to know Marisol’s desire to dramatize situations and blur the boundaries between imagined and real events in the film. Marisol is visiting a gallery with her classmates, and she sees the theft of a painting. The thieves later lure Marisol into their lair, using a doll-like ventriloquist’s dummy and the kidnap-come-negotiation begins, as Marisol attempts to persuade the thieves to return the artwork to the museum.¹⁹

¹⁹ Marisol’s relationship with the Svengali-like creators of her screen persona is echoed in the figure of the kidnapper’s use of the Marisol doll.

Marisol, emulating the principles of the *Sección femenina* of the Falange, as I will later discuss, becomes a caregiver to the thieves after they injure each other during a fight. The plot of the film is inspired by Aesop's *The Boy Who Cried Wolf* (1867), as Marisol's repeated story-telling leads to trouble and mishap. The film continues to enjoy popular acclaim amongst Spaniards and fans all over the world, in part thanks to its chirpy song-and-dance numbers such as "Una nueva melodía" and "Chiquitina". Marisol's escapades and misadventures are often framed with these upbeat bursts of song and performance from the star herself, the most notable being the title number, "Tómbola", arranged and composed by Augusto Algueró. In this number, Marisol performs with a band of men, playfully taking over the drums and trying on the glasses of one band member. The film does not differ drastically from the others in the Marisol franchise; it features the classic recipe of catchy numbers and a range of cutesy, twee outfits for the actress. Interestingly, the film includes many scenes that show solidarity and friendship between Marisol and her classmates. Like the spectators of the film, they watch Marisol's adventures and escapades with bated breath, hoping for her return and the resolution of arguments and misunderstandings.

A great deal of scholarship has tended to read Marisol as a puppet of a regime which sought to project certain elements of a European modernity. The literature also repeatedly focuses on the star's biography. Many scholars blend accounts of the actor's experience behind-the-scenes with their reading of her on screen persona, labelling her principally as a victim. Erin Hogan argues that the plot of *Tómbola* is the story of the 'appropriation of the child's body and voice' (Hogan, 2018, p. 73). On the other hand, Rob Stone (2002, p. 86) and Peter William Evans (2004) have commented on how a flash of dissidence or opposition often breaks through the veil of conformism in the Marisol films, and these are contentions which I will scrutinise throughout this chapter in order to propose instances of agency present in the narrative. Moreover, there has been little in-depth analysis of this third film in the Marisol series of films, *Tómbola*. When the film was released, following *Un rayo de luz* (Lucia, 1960) and *Ha llegado un ángel* (Lucia, 1961), audiences of Spanish film were already beginning to know and love the young actor. Where much academic work has focused on the first two titles of Flores' career, analysis of *Tómbola* is scarcer. There are a handful of examples worth noting: Jose Losada (2008), Erin Hogan (2013; 2018), and Miguel Pérez-Gómez (2010) have offered book sections and articles which focus analytically on the film, and Daniel Torras i Segura investigates the staging involved in *cine musical*, using scenes from *Tómbola* as part of his analysis (Segura 2015, p. 162). Tatjana Pavlović also dedicates analysis to *Tómbola* in her book *The Mobile Nation* (2011, p. 111). I focus on this third film here as it brings the questions of orphanhood and agency to the fore.

Whilst acknowledging these readings, I propose that in *Tómbola*, and through the character of Marisol, we find a more nuanced representation of the orphan child than has been previously acknowledged. My reading is placed against the contextual historical and social changes taking place in Spain at the point of the film's release in 1962. As part of the sustained close analysis, I incorporate reflections on the time period. I also offer a reading that is in tune with sociological turns in Childhood Studies. In the following section, I briefly present some key points which concern the historical and social context, before turning to outline my critical framework for the chapter in greater detail.

Historical and Social Context

In an early scene of the film, Marisol leads a group of girls riding on horseback into the countryside as she performs the song 'Una nueva melodía'. Fittingly, a new kind of melody can also be understood as speaking indirectly to the structural and societal changes occurring in 1960s Spain. Socio-historical factors as presented in this section will constitute vital preliminary context to begin my reading of the filmic text. I reflect on Spain's economic modernisation, the tourism boom and the changing ideology surrounding women's roles.

At the time of *Tómbola*'s release in 1962, significant changes were beginning to make themselves felt in the fabric of Spanish society. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the country had started down the path to a technocratic modernity and economic transformation. The newly appointed government of 1962 was tasked with implementing policy to bring about the economic modernisation of Spain. This process began in 1959 with the Plan de estabilización (Stabilization plan). Notably, and also in 1962, the government made its first moves to be associated with the European Common Market. The period between 1960 until 1974 saw fifteen years of rapid economic growth (Aceña and Ruiz 2007, p. 30). In this period the industrial sector experienced one of the most profound rates of growth, at an average rate of 9 per cent per annum (Aceña and Ruiz 2007, p. 31). Changes in industrial policy meant that the automobile industry became an important and symbolic element of the Spanish economic miracle. Pavlović points out that the rise of the industry in Spain coincided with 'the devaluation and stabilization of the peseta in 1959, broad spectrum reduction of state intervention and Spain's joining the OCDE' (Pavlović 2010, p. 186). I will return to this idea, that the image of cars as a symbol of development became integral to the image of a developing country, later in the chapter, as I build on Pavlović's work on the subject (2010, p. 183).

Spain's *apertura* also brought about diverse change leading to a shift in socio-cultural attitudes. Such changes seemingly led to a change in mentalities (Berncker 2007, p. 69), as Spaniards

considered emigration, education and social mobility in ways not seen previously during the regime. Despite this move from autarky to *apertura* in the period of 1962-1969, however, Spain remained a fascist state.²⁰ The country lacked a real social welfare system and, due in part to economic imbalance, there was also growing opposition to the regime.²¹

In the study of Spanish film and culture more broadly, it is also important to remind ourselves of José María García Escudero's reforms, as reviewed in the introductory chapter. Taking the role of the director general of cinema for the second time in his career in 1962, he introduced several reforms to the industry: these took the form of largely protectionist measures which imposed newly published censorship rules and the provision of film subsidies, with 'special interest' awards which demonstrated an explicit preference for certain films. Nuevo Cine Español (NCE) became the label for these oppositional films funded by Franco's government. The Marisol films, on the other hand, have been classed by scholars as popular Spanish cinema. Viejo Cine Español (VCE) was in its own right a popular form of cinema with Spanish audiences. Triana Toribio (2003, p. 94) and Faulkner (2006, p. 177) have underscored the overlap between NCE and VCE. Where many studies tend to analyse the NCE alone when considering films released in the final decades of the Franco regime, the Marisol films also merit closer analysis. We should not overlook Spanish popular cinema, nor reject the possibility that VCE films might also in fact contain oppositional elements. Indeed, Triana-Toribio has pointed out how both of these kinds of cinema functioned to blend 'change and continuity' (2003, p. 87), an assertion which I will reflect on later in this chapter.

²⁰ The Spanish Falangista party was less influential in the later decades of the regime.

²¹ However, the regime did introduce programmes through the Instituto Nacional de Vivienda that seemed to attempt a social housing policy, constructing more than 'half a million homes between 1940 and 1970' (Prout 2020, p. 288). This was later abandoned by the regime which looked then to encourage individual home ownership.



Figure 4 *Costa Brava: Vive como puedas* (Xavier Miserachs 1965)

Crucially, the *apertura* and the *planes de estabilización* facilitated Spain's opening up to investment, outward migration and to the outside world. Tourism became one of the integral pillars of the new economy, with two million tourists visiting in 1957, a figure that had doubled by 1960 (Pack 2007, p. 53.) As went the slogan of Manuel Fraga Iribarne's campaign from the early 1960s, 'España es diferente' and this difference was presented as a modern and vibrant holiday destination.²² This process was somewhat unique to Spain, which, perhaps with the exception of Portugal, was moving at a different pace to other countries in Western Europe. Opening up to visitors from abroad also exposed Spaniards to attitudes and cultural practices not governed by the dictatorship:

By the second half of the 1960s, the rustic, traditional Spanish way of life was being overturned by the spectacular influx of tourists. The tourists brought other lifestyles to the public's awareness for the first time, further transforming a rapidly changing society. This socio-economic transformation changed the face of Spain from a basically rural to an industrial country in less than two decades. (Palomares, 2007, p. 118)

Such effects of the tourism boom are explored cinematically in *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?*, a film which I explore in the third case study of this thesis. While Lucia's film does not stage a confrontation between visitors from outside and a previously hermetic community, as Ibáñez Serrador's coastal horror does, it is, nevertheless, also worth bearing this element of the Spanish economic miracle in mind when examining *Tómbola*: Marisol's own image is influenced by this

²² Thus, the irony that 'España es diferente' was all about Spain wanting to be the same: another modern European country that attracted investment. However, the country was somewhat different as it still remained a dictatorship.

fusing of cultures brought about by the entry of foreign visitors. This articulated the state's desire to present a modern European image of Spain, which was aspirational for Spanish filmgoers.

Another significant factor which plays into Marisol's depiction is the Franco regime's expectations of women's place in society. It will be useful to provide an overview of these attitudes to contextualise my subsequent reading of the character of Marisol later in the chapter. As Julia Hudson-Richards highlights, ideologies were, seemingly, beginning to shift in the public sphere, with the Sección Femenina magazine *Teresa* publishing an article in 1955 titled 'Las mujeres quieren trabajar' (2015, p. 87). Although having women in work had been beneficial for the Franco regime in the decades preceding this, the Falange and Sección Femenina often promoted childcare and housework as the principal work for women. Women who desired to work outside of the home prior to the 1950s faced numerous obstacles due to the regime's discriminatory labour policies, the institutionalizing of unequal pay and decisions that excluded women from most professions, as well as an emphasis on pronatalist policies (Hudson-Richards 2015, p. 96). Relatedly, we will see how some of these obstacles impacted both Ana and her mother in Saura's *Cría cuervos* in Chapter Two.

This outward change in discourse can be seen as a progressive shift to a certain extent and, notably, the Law of Political, Professional, and Labour Rights for Women was passed by the Spanish Cortes (Parliament) in July of 1961. The rhetoric had altered because women's work outside of the home became an important part of Spain's move towards economic prosperity:

The Sección Femenina propaganda laid the ideological foundation [...] by attempting to control the discourse about working women through promoting acceptable careers, while simultaneously reaffirming women's natural roles as wives, mothers, and homemakers. The law did not open the floodgates of women's full-time employment, but women's work became an essential part of the economic miracle, and the Sección Femenina was able to control its ideological significance, in part because it had spent the previous two decades gradually expanding ideas of what acceptable public roles could be for Spanish women. (Hudson-Richards 2015, pp. 100-101)

While this narrative on labour rights for women was presented by the regime as a step towards equality in these later stages of Francoism, it is worth remembering several factors which obstructed women's independence well into the later years of the regime. Contraception was illegal in Spain until 1977.²³ Divorce was only made legal in 1981 and women had to gain the consent of

²³ Nonetheless, falling birth rates at the time suggest its (illegal) use (Brooksbank Jones 1997, p. 94).

their husband to open a bank account.²⁴ Thus, whilst we can note how Marisol's brand of mischievous and modern femininity engaged filmgoers, it is well to remember that attitudes towards women at the time were not at all (that) progressive in reality. For a young orphan girl outside of the family unit, the realities would not have been quite so glorious. These socio-historical facts lurked behind the glossy *cine con niño* films that were so popular with Spanish audiences. For Spanish society, the 'new melody' was modernisation, but the overall song remained the same. Having now reviewed these key contextual elements, I turn to outline this chapter's critical approach.

Critical Approach

As outlined in the introductory chapter, I suggest that we can return to previously studied child-centred Spanish film and provide a reading that considers the agency of the child. My analysis draws on paradigms from Childhood Studies. These are, firstly, D.W. Winnicott's contentions on the power of play (1971), particularly spatial agency, which posits that we can look at children's worlds 'through the lens of space and place' in order to 'open up new understandings of their experience' (Hackett et al. 2015, p. viii), and secondly, imaginative agency, specifically Magical Thinking (Thomas 2014, p. 54). Childhood Studies has tended to move away from limited understandings of agency as either individual or collective, and instead offers definitions of children's agency as relational and hybrid (Wales, Mårtensson and Jansson, 2020, p. 2). These definitions also question the conceptions of power and ask how the child might have transformative and influential power in the adult world of the diegesis that has been overlooked previously. My reading of agency in Marisol's actions is underpinned by these new and innovative approaches to studying the representation of children through their imaginative games and activities.

The structure of this chapter moves with the chronological narrative of the film's internal diegesis. To this end, I have divided the film into four principal acts which are as follows: 'Introducing the Adorable Orphan', 'Missing María', 'Marisol and the Thieves', and 'Resolution and Return'. Beginning with the opening sections of the film, I firstly explore the cinematic portrayal of Marisol as the orphan child. I focus on her aesthetic appearance, relationships with other characters, and consider the paradigm of 'the adorable orphan' (Harvey 2004, p. 63). Subsequently, I study the following section of the film, in which Marisol searches for her missing friend, María Belén. I turn my analytical attention to Marisol's imaginative practices, reflecting on

²⁴ Although these kinds of attitudes towards women and work were arguably part of a broader transnational discourse, the enduring Franco regime meant that patriarchal structures were explicit and entrenched in Spanish everyday life for some decades longer than European neighbours.

the extent to which Magical Thinking can be read as agentive (Thomas 2014, p. 54). Moving to the third act of the film, the analysis dissects the rendering of Marisol as the girl becoming woman and how this in-between identity impacts on possibilities of agency. The section then discusses Marisol's use of various forms of transport and ruminates on her depiction as mobile during much of the film, reflecting on the relationship of the child with transport. Finally, the analysis concludes with an examination of the film's final act, in which Marisol and the thieves return the stolen painting and are welcomed back into society. In this final section, the analysis focuses on Marisol's voice and body, firstly studying how musical performances of in the film equip Marisol with agentive voice and then applying the notion of 'docile and unruly bodies' (Kallio 2007, p. 126) to my reading of the film.

My analysis of visual culture in this chapter is further supported by the inclusion of original *cromos* (collectable images of the film) which I have scanned in and included to illustrate various sections of my reading. The images are stills of various scenes of the film which I explore and I will note any disparities between the images and the film. In Spain, these *cromos* were first circulated in the 1940s and were used as promotional materials which many Spaniards began to collect. They were often found in packets of food or drink cartons as a free gift. Thanks to second hand auction site *Todocoleccion*, I was able to purchase some of these collectors' items and incorporate them into my study.²⁵ They serve as useful illustration of the visuals of the film and also underscore how the Marisol films were promoted.

In this chapter I ask whether we can detect the beginnings of an agentive iteration of the orphan child in *Tómbola*. As Spanish film, albeit very gradually, began to transform, adhering less and less to the authoritarian imposition of Franco's ideals about family and kinship, can we trace a similar transformation and modernisation of values in the depiction of the orphan child characters we find in cinema of this period? In what follows, I dissect the film chronologically, dividing the narrative into the aforementioned four acts. I now turn to the first of the four principal acts and explore the construction of Marisol as the adorable orphan child through a consideration of the initial character exposition and her on-screen image.

1. Introducing the Adorable Orphan

The analysis in this section is mapped onto the opening scenes of the film. I interrogate Marisol's cinematic presentation as an orphan child. To do so, I examine the establishment of her character in the opening scenes, which form the exposition portion of the plot. Secondly, I consider the

²⁵ Todocolección is a Spanish auction site for collectable and antique items. See: <<https://www.todocoleccion.net/>>

aesthetics of her appearance. Bringing these elements together, this section then considers the extent to which we can view Marisol as the adorable orphan (Harvey 2004, p. 63) and the degree to which she can command agency as a result.

This first act of the film introduces Marisol and her classmates to the spectator, setting the scene for the vibrant and quaint misadventure that will follow. The title sequence begins with an instrumental version of the titular song *Tómbola*. Marisol is rushing to catch the school bus, dressed in a red school uniform and her hair tied in plaits. We follow Marisol's journey to school and her mischievous interactions with her class and teachers. As she grabs her toast and runs for the bus, the spectator is already witness to her cheeky interactions with the adults in her life. Her bus journey to school is the first stage of her mischievous games and performances. The protagonist of the Marisol films seems, at first, to fill many purposes as the fictional orphan character. Firstly, she is able to assert a certain level of autonomy, thanks to her lack of ties to present parents. This also presents her as an apparently neutral figure in the unassuming, apolitical story of an innocent girl playing games with her friends. Alongside this, Marisol can elicit sympathy and support from the spectator. Her 'adorable' aesthetic, with large blue eyes and dazzling smile both function to make her a likeable central character. Marisol's adventures allow her to find her way in a changing socio-political world, in which the authority figures in her life seem to swing between desiring a more conservative behaviour from the child and a more indulgent approach to her mischief. In *Tómbola*, Marisol manages to put right the wrongs of thieves and criminals, brighten the lives of her family and friends and effectively save lives, as I explore in this chapter. This orphan-to-heroine storyline is strewn with scenes that unfold as a result of Marisol's apparent desire for drama and storytelling, which often makes her appealing to adults in the film, and to the adult spectator.

In this first act of the film, the spectator is met with repeated performances of cutesy song and dance numbers. This orphan-centred film does not seem to stray far from the tried and tested formula of the Marisol films, which play on this performative adorableness accentuated by cutesy performances and quaint outfits. The film also blends generic components of comedy with elements of an *españolada*, such as horse riding, song, and a longing for a 'traditional' Spain of Andalusian stereotypes such as equine culture and flamenco music. Indeed, in the case of Marisol and her fellow child stars, their youth and orphanhood are not only rendered in terms of adorability but are also fetishized. The concept of the adorable orphan is a term coined by Jessamy Harvey in her essay exploring *Marvelino, pan y vino* (2004). To summarise, Harvey proposes that representations of the orphan child bring about thoughts of the family unit and, also, that the cute qualities of such children stir feelings of protectiveness on the part of the spectator. In this way, the 'markedly cute' orphan characters demand an emotional investment from the spectator

(Harvey 2004, p.64). This element of the child protagonist's identity, along with catchy song and dance routines, were key ingredients in the recipe for success of the Marisol films. To an extent, orphanhood serves as a plot device in this genre of film, meaning that the child protagonists undertake quests to reunite with parents (Joselito), to find family and friends to fill the supposed lack (Marisol) or to search for answers from religion (*Marcelino, pan y vino*). Songs and performances, at times, turn out to be songs of sorrow and lament for their orphaned state.

Marisol's projection of orphanhood, however, was markedly different from that of her predecessor's. As Sarah Wright puts it, she was

[T]he darling of the Franco regime. She was the incarnation of *simpatía*, the smiling orphan who, like a Spanish *Pollyanna*, brought together feuding family members or danced her way through brightly coloured (with Eastman colour) fantasy worlds. (Wright 2013, p. 60)

Her orphan identity enabled her to fuse the past and future of the regime; her search for a familial unit or group works to promote the sacrality of the nuclear family; whilst her 'European' look as a blonde, stylish, young diva hinted at the expansion of identities possible for Spanish women in the 1960s. As such, she functioned to harmonize tensions and contradictions between a developing consumer society and the conservative regime in power. Moreover, the Marisol personality proved popular with Spanish audiences as it was seemingly easy to imagine her as the ideal child. Contemplating her persona after the release of *Tómbola*, Aguilar and Losada note,

No se pueden ignorar una serie de cualidades personales que influyen, decisivamente, en la configuración de esta popularidad. Marisol es la niña que todos querríamos tener en casa... Tranquila, discreta, no excesivamente traviesa, pero en ningún momento tímida. Despierta e inteligente, pero no precoz. Guapa, de agradable aspecto... Es la encarnación ideal del tipo de niña que puede encontrarse en cualquier familia española.

(The series of personal qualities that strongly influence the extent of her popularity cannot be ignored. Marisol is the girl that we would all like to have at home... Calm, discreet, not excessively naughty, but never shy. She's bright and smart, but not precocious. Pretty, good looking... she is the ideal embodiment of the type of girl that can be found in any Spanish family). (Aguilar & Losada 2008, p. 34)

It is worth noting, too, that the trajectory of the orphan child paired with a coming-of-age story is frequently a useful tool in fictional work. Indeed, Mullan notes that 'orphaning your main characters was also fictionally useful – a means by which they were made to find their way in the world' (2014, unpaginated). In Marisol's case, she often finds rebellious paths, as I will now turn to consider.

In this first act of the film the spectator is immediately presented with the rebellious attitude of the young protagonist, as she leans over the driver of the school bus to press the horn on her route to school. She then defies the authority of her schoolteachers, as she leads the other girls in a rousing rendition of *Los reyes godos* (a song to learn the names of the Visigoth kings and a clear sign that education had not strayed so far from Francoist education) and then *La Marseillaise* in the classroom. Song and performance are key if we are to consider Marisol's agentic, imaginative action. Where adults in the narrative repeatedly attempt to silence and, as Hogan argues, ventriloquise Marisol (Hogan 2018 p. 73), to some extent, Marisol resists this through her continued performances and disruptive outbursts. As her schoolteacher questions her as to why she does not concentrate her efforts on studying, Marisol responds by demonstrating that she has learnt the names of *Los reyes godos* through song.



Figure 5 The school bus

We witness instances of Marisol's raucousness and cheekiness in the character establishment as the adorable orphan, and we also find that the *mise-en-scène* becomes significant. Setting and costume are two essential elements which convey the structures of power in which the child finds herself. In one early scene Marisol and her best friend, María Belén are in the school gymnasium. They ride static exercise bikes (see Figure 6). Karen Lury has explored the inclusion of the child and the bike in a plethora of child-centred films (2016, unpaginated). Often when the child character is seen cycling or as an owner of a bicycle, we can note a sense of liminality; an often-liberating sense of motion in their narrative trajectory:²⁶ they are bicycles, which connote mobility,

²⁶ Perhaps bikes are most famously seen as liberating objects for children in films including *ET* (Spielberg 1982) and *Bicycle Thieves* (De Sica 1948).

but are static, which connote immobility. Thus, the static bikes in the gym represent a kind of desire for liberty yet restricted freedom within the school setting. This is paired with the prominence of the striking, red school uniform, which works to reduce individuality and can be seen as a tool for the preservation of power in the schooling system. Certainly,

Uniforms are all about control, not only of the social self but also of the inner self and its formation ... Rules about uniforms are highly detailed and fastidious. Wearing a uniform properly—understanding and obeying rules about the uniform-in-practice—turning the garments into communicative statements—is more important than the items of clothing and decoration themselves. (Craik, 2003, p. 128)

We can read this scene as symbolic of an adult-controlled world in which the children have restricted liberty and movement. These domains highlight the biopolitics of the Franco regime and how the school, Church and family unit often functioned as structures of control. The orphan children analysed in this chapter and in the wider scope of thesis often find themselves wrestling with the restrictions of these kinds of structures as their individual agency develops. In the scene shown in Figures 6 and 7, the uniforms also feed into the sweet aesthetic of the children, making them endearing protagonists that appeal to the cinematic spectator.



Figure 6 Marisol and María Belen ride exercise bikes in the school gym



Figure 7 Marisol and Maria ride the bus in school uniform.

Additionally, it is important to consider the wardrobe and styling of Marisol when thinking about the presentation of the character. Humberto Cornejo's costume design presents Marisol in a multitude of kitsch and vibrant dresses. This highlights the fortune Marisol has as an orphan who is sent to live with her wealthy uncle. The styling of Marisol became iconic in a way that we later recognise in connection with the little orphan Annie character, in the eponymous 1982 film. Where Annie has come to be recognisable in her striking red cardigan, we also find Marisol dressed frequently in the colour red. In this way, the wardrobe, composers, and filmmaking team were able to craft Marisol into an iconic, orphan child character. The striking red shade of uniform, recently made possible on screen owing to Eastman colour technology, directs the spectator's attention to the young girls, with the red connoting a sense of passion and vibrancy. Her image played a crucial role in her rise to fame and her distinctive outfits and looks transformed her into the quintessential *niña prodigio* of the *cine con niño*, and *españolada* film genres. These tailored, pristine, and striking looks are still remembered in Spanish contemporary popular culture.²⁷ Of course, these looks would often function to emphasise her identity as the angelic orphan girl. On the other hand, the outfits also speak to the film's aspiration to convey an image of a modern Spain. Peter William Evans notes the varying combination of costumes and styles. Evans expands on this, commenting that her European style dresses are usually more adult and show more skin. Her outfits are playful, modern, and cheerful. Pavlović furthers this description: 'Marisol occupied a space of future possibilities: she confronted life with ebullient wit, desparpajo (self-assurance) and simpatía. Marisol's optimism was contagious' (Pavlović 2011, p. 126). Again, Marisol is ideologically polyvalent, symbolised through the wardrobe changes. Likewise, she alternates between the young

²⁷ See <<https://www.hoymagazine.es/de-marisol-a-pepa-flores-sus-10-looks-mas-emblematicos/>>

orphan child and the adolescent woman. I will later examine her shifts between child and woman on-screen.

From the opening scenes Marisol is established as a protagonist who is at once sweet and rebellious, and this careful balance is achieved through character establishment and wardrobe and styling. For example, in the scene in which Marisol is scolded by her uncle following her escapades, her outfit harks back to *Alice and Wonderland* and the iconic blue dress from the 1951 animation (Luske, 1951) (see Figure 8). In this section, I have looked at how character establishment and styling are employed to construct the cherubic aspects of Marisol. In the next section, I focus on how imaginative and disruptive agency construct the rebellious facet of Marisol's persona.



Figure 8 Marisol sits and talks to her Uncle in an Alice and Wonderland style dress.

2. Missing María

The chapter now proceeds to discuss the second act of the film, in which Marisol's friend and classmate goes missing, or so Marisol believes. Marisol alerts the entire community, and a search party is sent out. In *Tómbola*, and specifically in this second act, we witness Marisol's frequent recourse to what adults of the film view as a vivid imagination. Her creative stories are frequently matched by her high energy musical performances. It is of note, then, that in Latin American countries the film was released under the title *Los enredos de Marisol* (Marisol's Muddles), emphasising how her adventures are an important plot point.²⁸ In this section, I will explore how the child's recourse to imaginative and artistic outputs can be reframed and reinterpreted as manifestations of her access to agency. I map this analytical exploration onto the second segment of the film, in which a horse-riding adventure becomes a search party.

²⁸ The film did not benefit from an international release cycle in the same way as films from the NCE did and beyond Spain, *Tómbola* was released primarily in Italy and the Hispanic diaspora.

In one of the first scenes that takes place in a space outside of the school setting, the girls move to the outdoors to go horse-riding. Here, we find Marisol leading the group of girls out into the countryside landscape (see Figure 9). The horses they ride immediately present them with the possibility of exploring the landscape and commanding an adventure of their own. Gradually, Marisol and her classmates are progressing towards forms of transport that allow for a greater sense of liberty and, in this case, misadventure. Simultaneously, however, the objects correspond to a form of gender stereotyping, in that the forms of transport on offer to the girls are indoor exercise bikes and horses. Later, one of the horses is spooked and abandons its rider, giving way to the chaos and child's play in which Marisol boisterously revels. When they witness a passing tank, a reminder of the enduring presence of the military in the Franco regime, Marisol's imagination sets itself in motion. Marisol comments on the eeriness of tanks in that it is not possible to know who is inside. '¿Qué fantasía se te está ocurriendo?' (What are you dreaming up?) asks María Belén, an attitude reflected by other characters in the film, including Marisol's Uncle, teacher, and the chief of police. When María Belén becomes separated from the group, Marisol raises the alarm and begins to spin her tale. She is later joined by the military and teachers from the school, who rush to aid her call for help; a scene which symbolises the military's intrusion on everyday life and activities in Spain at the time.



Figure 9 Marisol leads the way on horseback.

These events serve as an introduction to the powerful 'Magical Thinking' (Thomas 2015, p. 54) of Marisol. As Pérez-Gómez states, 'La chica tiene dos características principales: por un lado, es muy pizpireta y por otro tiene una gran inventiva' (The girl has two main characteristics: on the

one hand, she is a firecracker and on the other, she is very inventive) (Pérez-Gómez, 2010, p. 150). It is the inventive nature we see in Marisol that I will argue that we can read as a form of Magical Thinking. To recap, Sarah Thomas defines Magical Thinking as something that occurs for the child 'within the encroaching constellation of real-world events and circumstances beyond her control' and that the child 'turns to the imaginative realm to negotiate alternative forms of agency' (Thomas, 2014, p. 59). Marisol's adventures can be viewed as acts of defiance in which she paints pictures with vivid strokes of Magical Thinking that offer her these 'alternative forms of agency'. It is clear, as the girls ride into the countryside from the school, that Marisol seeks to lead and control the group. She says assertively: 'hoy mando yo, ¡y mando!' (today I'm giving the orders, and I order you to!). It is at this point in the narrative that we witness the beginnings of the protagonist's endeavours in creative story telling. Thanks to Marisol's tale-telling, when she does later witness the thieves stealing the painting from the museum, the other characters do not believe her claims. In these early scenes of the film in which Marisol raises the alarm, believing her friend has been kidnapped, the audience is presented with comical images that would not be out of place in one of Luis García-Berlanga's films. The army arrives with enormous tanks to aid her, and the police superintendent is in attendance. The headteacher pulls up in her car. All the adults in the film seem to have received the call to arms. The search party even takes to a helicopter at one point. Marisol's imagined theory is that her friend is being held hostage by a hunter, somewhere in the surrounding countryside. In fact, it seems that María Belén fell from her horse and the viewer later finds her sitting and talking peacefully with a local hunter.

In the aforementioned events of the narrative, her symbolic escapes from adult clutches and confines are emphasised visually. After the search for the supposedly missing María Belén, the adults realise that they have fallen victim to another one of Marisol's imaginative, tall tales. Lucia presents the viewer with an aerial shot of the two girls running across the countryside planes, with the military and band of authoritative figures giving chase close behind them (Figure 10). The distance of the aerial shot emphasises and exaggerates the chase scene and an apparent shift towards modernity is articulated visually, as the youth characters run away from adult forces of Francoist Power (the military, the state, and the school). The aerial shot in Figure 10 is further unsettling for the spectator in the way that it resembles a hunt.

The character of María Belén is also important to consider whilst reflecting on the socio-political context. Throughout her adventures, María remains at Marisol's side. The audience is presented with scenes of the two girls travelling to school, horse riding and dancing around in formal attire. María Belén looks up to Marisol, and Marisol in turn becomes a kind of motherly authority to her. The spectator is made aware that María Belén is the daughter of an ambassador

and comes from ‘un país africano’ (an African country). This dynamic becomes the stage for numerous examples of racist rhetoric. Compellingly, Hogan has pointed out how the geopolitical tensions of Spain’s own colonisation of African countries are played out in their friendship (Hogan 2018, p. 79). In the 1960s, Spain had still retained colonies in the Sahara and Guinea. Although María Belén’s roots are never made explicit,²⁹ we might read her as an apocryphal orphan of sorts, and Marisol’s parenting of her may symbolise Spain’s desire to hold on to its African colonies. The friendship raises further questions around endemic structural racism in 1960s era Spain, and the film exhibits various examples of racist language, remarks, and microaggressions. For example, in one scene María Belén tells Marisol ‘sería estupendo ser tan rubia como tú y tener unos ojos azules como los tuyos’ (it would be amazing to be as blonde as you and have blue eyes like yours). These racist remarks and discriminatory elements present in the narrative indicate that it will be crucial to acknowledge Spain’s colonial past when analysing Marisol and her friendship with María Belén and underscores some important avenues for future analyses of the film.



Figure 10 Marisol and María Belén make their escape in *Tómbola*.

Following the rescue operation and consequent chase scene, Marisol is scolded by her uncle for the costs that she has incurred with her inventive stories. The viewer is aware that Marisol is orphaned as she is living in the house of her uncle (Guillermo Marín). In their discussion, Marisol explains the reason behind her frequent recourse to this kind of Magical Thinking

MARISOL: Nunca diré una mentira si sé que es mentira. Mamá solo tuvo tiempo de enseñarme dos cosas: que hay que rezar todas las noches y que no se debe mentir.

²⁹ The actress Joëlle Rivero is from Malabo, Equatorial Guinea.

TÍO: Admito que también tú seas la primera engañada, lo cual nos llevó al descubrimiento a los auténticos culpables. Queda suprimida sus lecturas, precintada la televisión, películas ni una. ¡Hay que atar corto esa imaginación!

MARISOL: De acuerdo tío, me quedaré solo con la imaginación y andar por casa.

TÍO: Y me puedes decir ¿en qué consiste, esa, esa imaginación?

MARISOL Pues es, la que me hace compañía. Por ejemplo, cuando apago las luces a la hora de acostarme y me quedo sola, entonces esa imaginación me abre poquito a poquito la puerta. Yo, cierro los ojos y espero. Se oyen unos pasos que se van acercando. Y sabes lo que siento aquí, que me dan un beso.

(MARISOL: I'll never tell a lie if I know it's a lie. Mum only had time to teach me two things: that you have to pray every night and that you shouldn't lie.

UNCLE: I know that you yourself were also deceived, which led us to discover the real culprits. You're forbidden from reading; the television will stay off and no watching films for you. It's time to put your imagination on a short leash!

MARISOL: Okay uncle, I'll just keep my imagination and stay at home.

UNCLE: And can you tell me, what does that, that imagination consist of?

MARISOL Well, it keeps me company. When I turn off the lights at bedtime and I am left alone, then that imagination opens the door for me little by little. I close my eyes and wait. I hear footsteps getting closer. And do you know what I feel just here? Like someone is giving me a kiss on the cheek.)

Hence, with this final statement, Marisol attempts to explain to her uncle the powerful resource that is her imaginative, Magical Thinking. Later in this thesis, I look at how silence and refusal to comply enable child characters to command power over the adults in films including *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* and *Cría cuervos*. In this section, I explore how Marisol works within the constraints of the adult-centred hierarchy which envelops her world, using her voice (stories, performance) to exert agency. I will show how Marisol is able to empower herself through the act of creating stories and allowing her imagination to break through into the reality of her everyday life. She was able to tell such a provocative tale in the scenes prior to this discussion, that all the adults came to her aid and were under her control. In this discussion, however, we understand that imaginative thinking is multifaceted for Marisol. It further presents her with a kind of strength and resilience which she draws on, it seems, during challenging moments. Regarding other child-centred films, Sarah Thomas has read this kind of imaginative recourse and behaviour as the child's 'imaginative inner life and as a coping mechanism through which she finds fulfilment and agency' (Thomas 2014, p. 54) and I propose that this is also the case for Marisol in the plot of *Tómbola*. Through imaginative

stories and songs, Marisol manages to encourage both other children and adults to join her adventure.

On imaginative play in Latin American cinema, Deborah Martin notes the following:

Games and re-enactments can ...be seen as attempts to convert oneself from passive to active, and child's play can be seen as a narrative device through which imaginative transformations and attempts to cope with historical circumstances on an affective level, may take place. (Martin 2019, p. 144)

In the light of this contention, I believe that we can also view Marisol's tales as imaginative transformations which can be understood as her attempts to cope with the changes taking place around her. They are also more widely symbolic of a turn away from the limitations of an adult-centric world. Marisol's changing family situation also speaks to the way that Pavlović has explained that the Marisol films frequently exhibit the child as one who has a desire for familial unification or the 'restoration of broken familial ties' (Pavlović 2011, p. 126). Additionally, we could suppose that her behaviour is a reaction to the rapidly changing historical circumstances. *Tómbola* was released at a moment of change in Spanish society, as the country was moving towards economic *apertura* and modernity, as outlined in the historical context section.

Following Marisol's sentimental conversation with her uncle, the film returns to Marisol's school and classroom experiences. The subsequent scenes depict Marisol's unruly behaviour in class and its impact on the teachers who attempt to make her behave. She offers imaginative re-framings of tasks and reports set for the pupils as homework. In this way, Marisol's stories and re-framings disrupt the formal structure of the class, rousing the girls and causing a ruckus which resists the control of the adult teachers. For instance, Marisol is asked by her teacher to read out her essay on their 'gira campestre del domingo pasado' (trip to the countryside last Sunday). Instead, the protagonist reads out a blow-by-blow humorous diary entry with time stamps. The teacher is not amused by her cheekiness, but her classmates erupt in laughter. The focus of the class is then directed towards Marisol; the camera offers us a slow zoom through the classroom scene towards Marisol, who is centred upon with a close-up shot, and she becomes the cynosure of all eyes. As the teacher moves to the other side of the classroom, taking up her place in the background of the shot, we can also see how Marisol's face is brightly lit as she reads out her essay. The teacher then turns back suddenly, returning to the principal plane of the shot. We can note how Marisol's cheeky outbursts work to disrupt the hierarchies of power in the classroom and school environments and therefore can be viewed as the child agent's attempt to disrupt hegemonic discourse.



Figure 11 Marisol reads out her essay to the class

Deborah Martin has considered the theoretical concept of disruptive agency in her work on children in film. She explores how *La vendedora de las rosas* (Gavira 1998) is a film which is ‘torn between a privileging of the child’s disruptive agency, and a cinematic language which is still partially beholden to myths of childhood’ (Martin 2011, p. 268). In the same vein, *Tómbola* also fuses opposing representations of the child. On the one hand, Marisol as a character initially seems to occupy the romanticised image of the orphan, adorable innocent child in her aesthetic appearance. On the other hand, the film shows many instances of Marisol’s rebellious outbursts, and we can read these subversions as demonstrations of disobedience which seek to undermine the dominant powers at play, in this case the teacher in the classroom. As such, the film nuances its presentation of child subjectivity by at once presenting Marisol as a docile and obedient subject (demonstrated in the previous conversation with her uncle) and also as a defiant rebel. I will expand on this reading when I turn to analyse the final acts of the film. As both Martin and Karen Lury notes, film may show the ‘disruptive, impossible, unintelligible aspects of the child... which allows the child agency’ (Lury cited in Martin 2019, p. 54).

Additionally, the many faces of Marisol (modern young lady, conservative caregiver, prodigy child and adorable orphan) means that she resists one singular identity. Thus, her identity as such

is flexible. She shifts and adapts in order to triumph over the adult figures and in order to negotiate her adventures:

She fits everywhere: equally comfortable in aristocratic households (*Un rayo de luz*, *Tómbola*), middle class milieu (*Ha llegado un ángel*) and in struggling working-class families (*Marisol rumbo a Río*). (Pavlović 2011, p. 127)

This chapter will further scrutinise how Marisol manages this kind of adaptation in the way she, still being a child, projects, and play acts the figure of the Spanish woman and housewife, as this was idealised during the Franco regime. I turn my attention to this in the following section, where I also investigate Marisol's use of several modes of transport.

3. Marisol and the Thieves

There are numerous examples of the way that Marisol brings together traditional, conservative elements of Francoism from the previous decades as well as the state's project of modernity. Off-screen, the creation of a Marisol doll encouraged consumerism as the Marisol fanbase expanded rapidly. In many ways, the ease with which Flores could be made into a doll demonstrates how many doll-like qualities were already built into the roles she played, and the performances coaxed from her. On-screen, the character paired stylish outfits and her North-European-coded blonde hairstyle with traditional women's roles, in line with the values of the Franco regime. This section of the chapter endeavours to investigate the various roles of Marisol and how they may also relate to her own agency within the narrative. Likewise, I present an analysis of the child's relationship with various modes of transport and question the extent to which the movement of the child and the child in transit can be linked to agentic behaviour. Essentially, both the principal facets of analysis in this section are also linked to the process of modernisation and its influences on cinema, as I will expand on later in this section. I focus this section of my inquiry on the third act of the film, in which the conflict point of the plot occurs.

Following the aforementioned scenes which show Marisol in the classroom environment, the plot transitions to Marisol visiting a gallery with her classmates and teacher. It is here that she witnesses the theft of a painting (*La Madonna de las rosas*), which the thieves replace with a copy. The tale that ensues is one of chaos and chase, as Marisol attempts to recover the real painting but struggles to have her testimony heard. The plot of *Tómbola* also later depicts Marisol as the angelic female caregiver to the band of thieves who have kidnapped her. The adult-child role reversal is played out visually in the scene in which Marisol, dressed as a nurse, tends to the wounds and injuries of her kidnappers: Pepe 'Joe Carter' (Rafael Alonso); Batacazo, el Gordo (Roberto Camardiel); and Mario (Enrique Ávila), inside their safe house. With the thieves tucked up again

here in children's beds, Marisol cares for them as if they are children. The long shot shown in Figure 12 highlights the comedic impact of the role reversal, with traditional toys such as the rocking horse, a beach ball and building blocks. Marisol's outfit further cements the fetishization of her body that was intertwined with the societal reception of her films, as she is dressed in a nurse outfit. The young 'nurse' explains to the men that she has taken a course in first aid at her school and sets to work caring for them (see Figure 12).

Simultaneously, it is possible to read this scene as almost parodical. In a similar way to the one in which Diego Galán brings together humorous elements of Spanish cinematic representations of women, creating a kind of hybrid musical come comedy documentary in *La pata quebrada* (Galán, 2013), we see Marisol present various exaggerated, representations of the Spanish woman idealised by the Franco regime. The scenes shown in Figures 12 and 13 lead us to reflect on the regime's expectations for women and how this was presented to susceptible young girls. Thus, we can read the underlying message as subversive, or as one that suggests a need to move beyond iterations of female representation seen through the 'male-gaze' (Mulvey 1975, p. 808).³⁰ Antonio L. Ballesteros's camerawork offers images of the female caregiver and the suffering man that are not dissimilar to images found in Nationalist propaganda for the Sección Femenina of the Falange. However, the suffering man is usually a component of male-gaze eroticisation, which includes the suffering man being cared for by the female character, something we even see in how Jesus Christ is often depicted on the cross. This would seem to function in the overarching Lolita-esque fetishization of Marisol throughout her cinematic career.

³⁰ Despite the fact Mulvey's essay focuses on Hollywood cinema, her psychoanalytically-informed reading is illuminating across national cinemas, which themselves drew on the Hollywood model.



Figure 12 Marisol attends to the men and their injuries, dressed as a nurse.



Figure 13 Marisol nurses her kidnapper by removing a bullet from his body.



Figure 14 Auxilio Social microfilm collection, Cardiff University Special Collections.



Figure 15 The Sección Femenina visit injured soldiers at Hospital General Saliquet (1939)³¹

Interestingly, many magazines aimed at women in the 1950s and 1960s, including *Mujer* and *Teresa*, showcased a dialogue on the changing roles of women, promoting consumerism by advertising desirable fashion and beauty products, whilst simultaneously highlighting the different roles and extra-domestic pursuits available to women. The discussions in the magazines, like the characterisation of Marisol, attempted to smooth over the differences between conservatist traditionalism and modern consumerism. ‘This, then, marked a subtle step toward fuller inclusion of women in public life and the workplace, and echoes the ongoing shift in discourse on women’s

³¹<https://efs.efeservicios.com/foto/madrid-diciembre-1939-seccion-femenina-falange-espanola-tradicionalista-jons-distribuye-obsequios/8000252084> >

rights' (del Moral 2021, p. 90). 'They further promoted the act of consuming and, through it, performance of middle-class identity—an impulse that underpinned Spain's mass consumer revolution of the 1950s and 1960s' (del Moral 2021, p. 69). The images employed by these media are not dissimilar to those we are offered in *Tómbola*. Pepa Flores herself would even go on to feature on the cover of *Teresa* magazine (see Figure 18). Marisol's many outfits throughout the film, then, reflect the changing imagery surrounding women's place in work and home life that was being transmitted to the Spanish public at the time of the film's release.



Figure 16 A cover of *Mujer* magazine (source: Todocoleccion)³²



Figure 17 Inside an issue of *Mujer* from 1963 (source: Todocoleccion).³³

³² Available at: <<https://www.todocoleccion.net/coleccionismo-adultos-revistas/revista-mujer-ano-1963~x50548019>>

³³ Available at: <<https://www.todocoleccion.net/coleccionismo-adultos-revistas/revista-mujer-ano-1963~x50548019>>

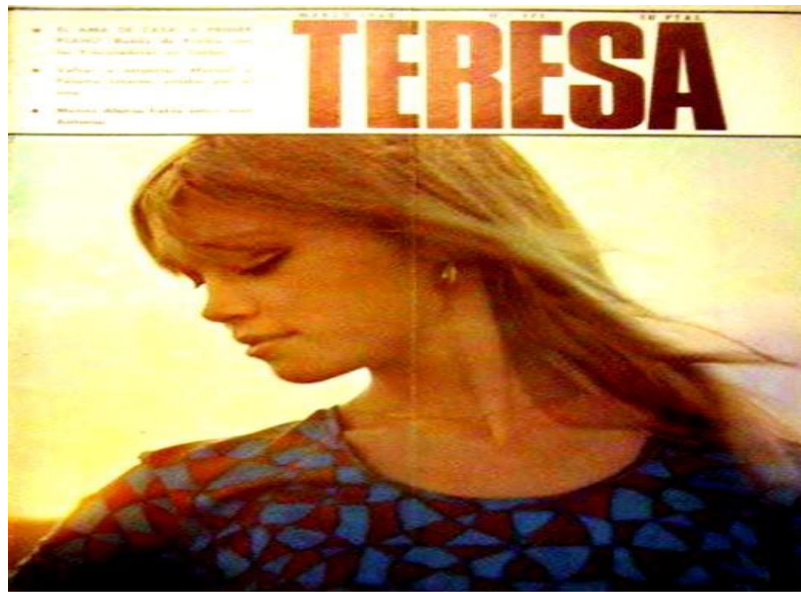


Figure 18 Marisol on the cover of *Teresa* 1968, from the Facebook page Yo Soy Fan de Pepa Flores.³⁴

To return now to the imagery we find in the film, in one close-up shot, we find Marisol tending to the wounds of one of the men, the close-up shot of their side profiles filling most of the screen (see Figure 13). Marisol then takes on the role of the maternal figure or caregiver. It is almost as if she is playing one of her imaginary games. However, this scenario takes on a very real element. Hogan claims that the portrayal of Marisol in this film functions effectively as a tool to encourage submission to traditional gender roles:

At the thieves' safe house in *Tómbola*, Marisol transforms, and she is effectively domesticated. Her education in an all-girls private school, which teaches her how to cook and change diapers, prepares her for this function. 'Blonde Marisol' assumes the role of nurse when the three greedy robbers are bedridden after injuring one another in an armed skirmish, invoking echoes of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. (Hogan, 2018a, p. 75)

This reading also fits in with the thematic subjects of Marisol films as outlined by Pavlović:

(1) real or apocryphal orphanhood, family discord, and the restoration of broken family ties; (2) class mobility; (3) focus on Marisol as the epitome of modernity; (4) secularization of religious values; (5) displacement of erotic and sexual elements onto the child; (6) lack of social conflict; and (7) an emphasis on fantasy and pleasure. (Pavlović, 2011, p. 126)

Along with her all-singing, all-dancing talents, she seems effortlessly to balance an immaculate, youthful, and modern image with a domesticity. To an extent, then, Marisol also becomes the

³⁴ Available at <<https://www.facebook.com/yosoyfandepapaflores/photos/marisol-portada-de-la-revista-blanco-y-negro-n%C2%BA-2765-1-de-mayo-de-1965-madrid-15/10150803771202889>>

epitome of the modernity as the contemporary woman of the later stage Franco regime. Read in this light, the orphan child thus functions in this film to demonstrate, that the young Spanish woman should strive to be the perfect housewife-in-training. The film therefore also presents a traditional Francoist conception of social improvement in the sense that women were also encouraged to marry, to become wives and stay at home in order to achieve self-betterment. Whilst encouraging a submission to traditional gender roles in her activities, her chic, fashionable outfits and audacious charm mean she engages in an impressive balancing act. Marisol moves fluidly between roles which conform to conservative ideals of Spanish womanhood and the ultimate chic, European woman. She is a fusion of European modernity and Spanish tradition.

Earlier in the chapter, the analysis underscored the importance of the aesthetics of Marisol's appearance and how costume design becomes a fundamental analytical concern in my reading of *Tómbola*. The outfits she wears in the film further accentuate Marisol's propensity to move fluidly between the roles expected of women and girls. These different roles and corresponding attire were consistently depicted in visual media aimed at women in the 1950s and 60s. We can see how this corresponds with the front cover of *Teresa* magazine from 1959 (see Figure 20). In the publications, a range of women are portrayed in different clothing and attire, suggesting the new possibilities of roles and jobs available for women. Similarly, we find Marisol in a range of outfits, as she moves freely between roles, environments, and social classes. Figure 19 is a still from Marisol's visit to the church and she convinces the priest to come to her aid. She wears a headscarf, a style we also see replicated, along with a nurse's uniform, on the front page of the magazine (see Figure 20).



Figure 19 Marisol visits the priest in the church to ask for help



Figure 20 Cover of Teresa magazine (1959).³⁵

With this cinematic transition to a modern, yet still simultaneously Francoist, conception and projection of the female child, we can note a gradual shifting in the freedom and agency of the child orphan character compared to previous films of *cine con niño*. In fact, Rob Stone has commented that Marisol's 'films did let slip an occasionally subversive attitude in the way her characters often triumphed over adults in admittedly hackneyed plots' (Stone, 2002, p. 86). A notable illustration of Stone's assertion is Marisol's relationship with the adult figures in her school, the thieves, and other figures of authority. She slips through the clutches of each of the adults who

³⁵ Available at <https://en.todocoleccion.net/collectables-magazine-newspapers/revista-teresa-octubre-1959-n-70~x41771478#sobre_el_lote>

attempt to restrict her movement. Markedly, by playing the role of caregiver and nurse to the male thieves, Marisol eventually persuades the men to do as she wishes. Her shifting identities, articulated by the various wardrobe styling and outfit changes, equips her with influence and the possibility of manipulating events.

Outside of her performing in specifically fictional Marisol films, Flores also appeared frequently in the NO-DO newsreels, the state-controlled series of news reports screened before films (1942-1981). Again, this tied her in with the regime's project of tradition and modernity. In one newsreel, available from the Filmoteca Espanola, we find Marisol on holiday on a beach in Benidorm in the 1960s.³⁶ In another, the audience is presented with Marisol performing a Flamenco dance in traditional dress on stage after a screening of one of her films (RTVE, 1962). At the same time as becoming an international figure and child prodigy, it is further evident that she represented a changing Spanish society, whilst presenting a conservative and folkloric image of 'Spanishness'. Whereas in the trajectory of her reality the image of Pepa Flores was co-opted as part of a national project, the fictional Marisol character of *Tómbola* benefits from a shifting identity. She is a hybrid protagonist (Evans 2004, p. 137) that manages to subvert traditional adult-child hierarchies of power. Frequently she capitalises on this in her relationships with adult characters.

For example, Marisol previously convinced her kidnappers, the band of thieves, to allow her to sing during their journey under the guise that a child singing would conceal an act of kidnapping. Through song, Marisol negotiates the continued inclusion of her voice in the narrative. As she begins her rendition of "Lobo, lobito", the criminals begin to soften as they seem to be mesmerised by her song. Marisol then subverts typical adult-child relations as she gives one of the men a chin chuck, something we see María Belén receive from the police officer in the previous scene. 'A reversal of the typical caressing of the cute child, the chin chuck serves to underscore the way that Marisol transgresses her childish role' (Wright 2013, p. 67). In these two versions of the chin chuck, we can compare how the two orphan children are muted and silenced by adults. Nonetheless, we see them negotiate other ways to speak, especially in the case of Marisol.

Besides her command of various characters and roles, the child protagonist of this film is repeatedly shown at the wheel of vehicles, literally and symbolically taking charge of her onward journey. I turn here to consider Marisol's relationship with modes of transport. In *Tómbola* the spectator is frequently presented with images and scenes of Marisol and her acquaintances using

³⁶ See
<https://www.facebook.com/yosoyfandepepaflores/videos/10156434336922889/?__so__=channel_tab&__rv__=latest_videos_card>

forms of transport. We see Marisol on a bus, on a bike, on horseback, in a tank and driving a car. These are just some of the modes of transport that the children manage to use or acquire. In this section, I direct my cinematic analysis towards these kinds of images and positioning of the child orphan. I draw on Tatjana Pavlović's *The Mobile Nation* (2011) to support my analysis of transport. Pavlović has highlighted that both tourism and automobiles were inseparably tied to progress and modernisation, as she examines the concept of mobility during from 1954-1963 (2011, p. 5). In a like manner, I maintain that we see a progression in the kinds of movements that the children are able to make thanks to these kinds of vehicles. This section will expand and exemplify this progression, applying theories rooted in Children's Geography to examine the significance of the motif of movement of the orphan child.

We can define the child as a liminal subject primarily in that they are in a state of transition between childhood and adulthood. Childhood has been viewed as a rite of passage to obtain identity as an adult; the period of childhood itself is liminal (Thomas 2019, pp. 9-10). This transitional period of life may afford the child the benefits of fluidity and a status of someone who exists 'in-between' (Thomas 2020, p. 9). In *Tómbola*, we can read the child orphan as liminal in terms of temporality but also as regards to movement. By considering the objects of movement and transport found in the narrative, I propose a reading of how Marisol moves and negotiates a space for agency in-between adult dominated sites. The movement of the child becomes a site of resistance and gateway to agency. Through a consideration of this kind of movement of the child, we allow for a multifaceted conception of children's agency.

We can apply this paradigm to the movement of Marisol herself within the narrative of *Tómbola*. In one of the opening scenes of the film, we find Marisol boarding a school bus with her classmates (see Figure 21). On the bus, the girls, dressed in their neat red uniform, sing the chirpy number *Chiquitina* composed by Augusto Algueró and José Torregrosa. Although spirits run high, the children are passengers on this adult-driven bus which will ferry them to their destination, the school. They are transported to school which is another adult-controlled domain, as education is compulsory for this age group. This kind of transportation will later be contrasted with vehicles that the children themselves control and steer.



Figure 21 Marisol and María on the bus journey to school

In a later scene, when Marisol is kidnapped and becomes a kind caregiver to the band of thieves, we find shots of her riding a cart with another child and driving the thieves in their truck. Here, we are reminded of a similar scene from *Un rayo de luz* in which Marisol is riding another horse and cart with other children running alongside. Throughout the course of the film, then, Marisol is repeatedly shown in transit. I argue that we can read her movement and use of transport as a form of resistance to the physically walled structures of adult-controlled domains, including her uncle's house, the school, and the art gallery. Incidentally, these adult domains are spaces in which Marisol is scolded and told to behave. Public spaces are therefore coded as adult spaces, into which the child must fit. In the private spaces of transport, the child accesses an independent mobility, in command of vehicles. This is an analytically overlooked element of *Tómbola*. As the plot unfolds, we are shown the transition of the children from restricted forms of movement in the public space to private spaces within transportation in which the child takes the reins. Where Hogan has argued that Marisol 'articulates her usefulness as a docile body for Francoism' (Hogan, 2018a, p. 74), comparing her to the ventriloquist's dummy which belongs to the thieves Marisol encounters, we can query this reading by studying the child's relationship with modes of transport in closer detail. Whilst she does, in many ways, serve as a mouthpiece for Francoist, Catholic, and conservative values, we can still trace some development of her agency and autonomy throughout the plot in these varying forms of transportation.

Movement and transport offer the child a pathway through their environment without the direct influence of adults. Forms of transport are transitional spaces in which the child can claim space as their own during the journey. We have seen this idea previously in child-centred film: in

Les 400 coups (Truffaut 1960) the title sequence introduces shots of Paris, seemingly a child's perspective from the inside of a car window. The final scenes of *Linba de Passe* (Salles and Thomas, 2008) offers the spectator the child at the wheel of a bus. Randall has also explored this concept of movement and children, noting that youth characters can be viewed as de-territorial subjects (Randall 2015, p. 223). Forms of transport and movement can bestow the child orphan character with a sense of agency and space within their environment that they may not otherwise have occupied. At the same time, the continued status of Marisol as in motion could be seen to speak to Spain's national movement towards economic development and modernity. Whereas in earlier decades of the dictatorship, women and children had limited mobility, in the later stages of the regime the turn to modernisation and growing consumerism presented novel modes of access. This kind of project of indoctrination sought to encourage active consumerism and the desire to have the most modern material objects. The mass production of automobiles was part of this, and the importance of their role is exhibited in other films of the period, such as *El cochecito* (1960) and looking forward to *Sor Citroën* (1967). In 1961 there were 12 cars per 1000 Spaniards and by 1971 this figure rises to 71 per 1000 (Buchanan 2007, p. 91). Although this was still a relatively low number, cars were frequently promoted as offering a sense of empowerment and freedom, and this enabling potential of the vehicle is reflected upon in the plot of *Tómbola*. The inclusion of transport as a prominent element in *Tómbola* can be seen, therefore, as a way that consumerism and automobilism were presented to audiences including young Spaniards as future consumers of cars.

In the scene depicted in Figure 23, we find Marisol behind the wheel of the truck. The spectator is witness to an explicit reversal of roles. In the previous scene, the kidnappers engaged in a heated argument which leads to them firing guns and wounding each other. Consequently, Marisol must drive the truck and becomes the leader of her own kidnapping party. It is difficult to ascertain whether she is now complicit in her own manipulation or if she is again locating transitional spaces and forms of transport that will ultimately aid her in negotiating her own agency. Sitting in the driving seat behind the wheel, it seems as though the power has been transferred to her, and she even pulls out two guns on one of her passengers. The motif of the young, seemingly innocent child in possession of a gun is an image we will see repeated in films that form the subsequent case studies of this thesis. As Marisol attempts to control the truck, the image of the child behind the wheel looks forward to images we have seen since in Spanish-language cinema. *Barrio* (Aranoa, 1998) features a scene in which the three child protagonists, Javi, Rau and Manu, sit on a bridge that runs over the M30 and M40 ring roads. Discussing which car or motorbike would be their own, transport again here signals the chance of liberation and autonomy from the stifling, adult-

centric city of Madrid as it is depicted in that film. We can state, then, that transport offers the child a passage towards partial control and a space in which their agency can cultivate. Now that I have examined this third act of the film, the chapter will turn to consider the resolution of the narrative and reflect on Marisol's musical performances.



Figure 22 Marisol rides in a horse and cart



Figure 23 Marisol drives the truck and points a gun.

4. Resolution and Return

Ultimately, the plot of *Tómbola* culminates in the return of the real painting to the gallery. The men hand themselves in voluntarily to the police and call Marisol by telephone to let her know the news. They tell her that visiting days are Thursdays and Sundays and ask her to visit them. And when the thieves are finally released from prison, Marisol greets them with a musical performance

of the title song “Tómbola”. In this final section of the chapter, I examine the inclusion of performance in the film and the rendering of Marisol as a docile and unruly body. Throughout the 1 hour 43-minute film, Marisol performs 11 musical numbers. A staple of the *cine con niño*, musical numbers created a catchy soundtrack for many of the films and the all-singing and dancing child stars increased their popularity through song and dance routines which mesmerised audiences. In this section, I will study and dissect two of these performances, in order to examine how they relate to the potential agency of the child orphan. The analysis will firstly consider the locations of the performances and secondly, how they support the inclusion of Marisol’s voice in the narrative. I will discuss how her performances simultaneously present the child orphan as a ‘docile body’ but also offer opportunities to read her as an ‘unruly body’ (Kallio 2007).

Through the act of performance, Marisol holds the attention of adults and children who surround her, in the same way that Lucia ensured that the cinematic spectator was mesmerised by the young actress. The song and dance numbers of course form part of the successful Marisol formula which saw her records on sale alongside her motion pictures and a range of Marisol dolls. The pairing of adventure film plots with chirpy musical sequences was a repeated cinematic structure based around the character of Marisol ‘whose narrative function is to smooth out social differences and tensions, and musical one is to perform a series of songs, ranging from Flamenco to Pop’ (Faulkner 2013, p. 111). Clearly this is the case for *Tómbola*, as the final two songs are “Fandangos” (a Flamenco number which Marisol performs in transit) and a reprise of the upbeat pop hit song of the title, “Tómbola”.

Minor resistances to the controlling ideology of the film emerge from the very force of Marisol’s extraordinary performances, especially in her musical numbers, which are characterized by precocious assertiveness and almost hoydenish authority. (Evans 2004, p. 135)

Through inserting her voice into the narrative musically, the character of Marisol successfully influences the world around her and the actions of adults. When Marisol convinces her kidnappers that she be allowed to sing, we can view this as a strategic tactic of resistance. Adamant that no one would suspect a kidnap when a child is singing, Marisol preserves the inclusion of her voice and also commands the attention of all of the men with her rendition of *Lobo, lobito* (see Figure 24). Thus, Marisol’s songs constitute an additional avenue for her to affect and influence events in the narrative.



Figure 24 Marisol sings 'Lobo, lobito' and the thief expresses delight.

Many of Marisol's performances also take place in sites of transition, whether in the sense of being physically on the move or in the sense of a symbolic movement between sites. The opening sequence of the film, for example, features Marisol singing on the school bus. Later, she will sing in the thieves' truck as she is kidnapped. She sings on a horse cart which is steered by a young boy. Finally, she sings in the car which hosts the return journey of the thieves to hand in the painting. The settings and locations of her musical numbers serve again to emphasise the child's propensity to shift between locations (read ideologies, social class, identities) fluidly and with ease. What is more, we are reminded again of the importance of transport and how Spain was promoting herself as the 'mobile nation' (Pavlović 2011). The prevalence of modern vehicles offers a kind of modern mobility for the young girl. The modes of transport, paired with pop hit musical numbers, can be read as a cinematic performance of modernity. Where the film's ideological motive might be to use the autonomous child orphan, liberated from the regimes of family and school, to project this image of modernity to the world, the film also works to 'reveal tensions between tradition/modernity and immobility/movement' (Pavlović 2011, p. 116.) These tensions can be seen, for example, in scenes in which we find Marisol travelling in cars and modern vehicles but later in the film she is also shown riding a horse and cart. In these vehicles she switches from singing up-beat pop numbers to more traditional flamenco songs. Thus, the orphan child employs performance as a tool which enables her to iron out ideological tensions intradiegetically—to other children and adult onlookers—and extradiegetically—to Spanish audiences -; she is presented as 'a blend of conformity and rebellion' (Evans 2004, p. 139).

It will also be fruitful to consider how Marisol's songs allow the character to appear to adhere to certain behaviours expected of the child. Indeed, 'to survive in the "nets of discipline", children and young people need to find ways to appear as docile bodies, but still maintain their unruly bodies' (Kallio 2007, p. 127). The concept of docile bodies is taken from Foucault, who posits

that: 'A body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved' (Foucault 1979, p. 136). Unruly bodies, following Kallio's definition, are by contrast free from 'exterior powers' (Kallio 2007, p. 126). Kallio further draws on De Certeau's writing, explaining that children 'can use various tactics to promote their own objectives and sometimes they can even ruse the prevailing order' (Kallio 2007, p. 126).

In this vein, Marisol's musical numbers support her depiction as the adorable singing orphan child who wins hearts and minds. Again, this is especially clear when she convinces her kidnappers to allow her to perform and throughout the rendition, the men seem to become entranced by her melodic tones and charming manner. This kind of dynamic and power that Marisol successfully exerts occurs frequently with older male characters in the film. Marisol harnesses and performs certain charismatic behaviours, adhering to stereotypical qualities expected of women during the period. She is ladylike, a caregiver, and performs multiple other roles as the feminine performer, the doting daughter, or rather niece, and rebellious and popular schoolgirl. As I have noted, these personalities are also conveyed by various outfits, hairstyles, and overall looks. As such, the child protagonist uses her bodily and performative agency to effect change in the events of the film. Where Marisol may at first appear to 'articulate her usefulness as a docile body for Francoism' (Hogan, 2018a, p. 74) in scenes in which she is reprimanded by her uncle, teacher, and other sources of authority, the cinematic spectator is later witness to the child protagonist's harnessing of bodily autonomy, meaning she can be read as an 'unruly body':

Children's politics is based on the autonomy they hold over their bodies. Although young people do not have autonomous positions at other political scales, the right and ability to control and command one's own body belongs to them as well. (Kallio 2007, p. 126)

We can apply this reading to one of the final scenes of the film. As Marisol arrives to meet the three men as they leave prison, she greets them with a beaming smile and turns to conduct her classmates in the reprise of "Tómbola". The men leave behind the grey, barred doors of the prison and are enveloped into a sea of joyful song and dance. Although Marisol remains in restrictive school uniform, she leads them away from the oppressive, rigid, and confining domain of the prison. In Foucauldian terms, the prison and the school are institutions where bodies become the subjects of ruling and oppression. Foucault explains this in *Discipline and Punish* (1979) noting that prisons and schools are the sites in which docile bodies are disciplined. With this in mind, we can return to read the final scene of the film. Marisol and her classmates, along with the thieves, dance and joyfully march past uniformed guards, who represent systems of power and control, and Marisol guides them forward towards the camera and the scene gradually fades out. This scene

articulates the child orphan's representation as an unruly body through the act of unstructured and playful dance.

In sum, Marisol's actions demonstrate how she possesses a certain independence and autonomy, which seems far removed from the rendering of the child as obedient daughter or pupil (a docile body):

Following Foucault and de Certeau's thinking, one could say that as sons, daughters, pupils and patients, the underaged are made into docile bodies, but as children and youth they may retain their unruly bodies, which are free from exterior powers. (Kallio 2007, p. 127)

Hence, the inclusion of Marisol's voice and its embodied-ness within an unruly body within the narrative supports the argument that she is an active agent.

Conclusions

This chapter has examined the trajectory of agency of the orphan child protagonist Marisol in the film *Tómbola*. As we have seen, Marisol blurs the lines between the child as puppet and the child who has shifted to an agentive actor. Taking the film as comprising of four acts, I have traced Marisol's trajectory of agency through the film. *Tómbola* presents the child as the 'adorable orphan' through the initial character establishment and in the wardrobe and styling of the character. Marisol's misadventures and their setting within spheres of power and control provided fruitful ground for reflection on the potency of Magical Thinking and 'disruptive agency' as acts of negotiation and alternative agency. Marisol performs various 'women's roles', which, as we have seen, articulate the shifting ideologies surrounding women's labour in 1960s Spain. The prominence of transport in the narrative also underscored the push for modernisation during the period and sparked contemplation of the transgressive child in motion. Through the avenue of musical performances, Marisol's voice becomes a means of articulating resistance. In the analysis set out in the final section, we have seen how Marisol can be read as both a docile and an unruly body.

If we are to recognise nuanced forms of agency in the child orphan protagonist, it is essential that we reconceptualize the power of the child and her capacity to influence the adult world. I sought to disentangle my reading of scenes in which we witness acts of resistance and assertiveness from other interpretations of Marisol as solely a passive instrument. Marisol's playful tactics of negotiation mean she is able to assert agency and achieve control in multiple relationships and situations in the film, as this chapter has demonstrated. I noted that previous scholarship has tended to adopt an inverse approach: Marisol as a puppet or mouthpiece; Marisol as a symbol of

modernity; and Marisol through the lens of her personal life. The analysis has scrutinised and built on these three previous approaches to offer a new analytical approach to the film, which challenges some of the established views of Evans (2004) and Hogan (2013; 2018) regarding the film. Whilst I have acknowledged that the actress behind the character of Marisol was moulded and manipulated into an archetypal, adorable performing orphan, I have also demonstrated that, in *Tómbola*, we can recognize some initial steps in the direction of the agentive, 'raucous and assertive' orphan child protagonist (Evans 2004, p. 129). Moreover, the chapter has revealed that *Tómbola* is exemplary of a discernible shift towards a space in Spanish film for the voice and agency of the child orphan character.

This chapter has revealed lines of potentially engaging future academic investigation. Marisol's body, for example, has been a recurring element of the present inquiry. Her body is seen in transit, moving, and shifting through spaces. Her body is dressed up in multiple outfits, enabling her to take on various identities. She is depicted at once as both a docile and an unruly body. The performance of dances and musical numbers in the film was necessarily centred around the child's body. Finally, Marisol occupies a pre-pubescent body, allowing her to shift between child and intimating the young woman she would become. This liminal, in-between state (Thomas 2019, p. 9) enables her to harness an agency which is afforded by her capacity to move fluidly between spaces and roles alike. Beyond the docile/unruly opposition I have discussed, the importance of the child's prepubescent and changing body in harnessing agency on screen, then, may well serve as a useful future avenue of investigation.

Marisol, so critical to the national imaginary as I have shown, influences later portrayals of the orphan child; we will see her defiant behaviours repeated in later Spanish cinema centred around the orphan child. As Evans points out, however:

there is nothing here, of course, of the direct challenge to the prevailing attitudes that may be found in the work of 1960s and 1970s dissident Spanish filmmakers. Marisol's behaviour is worlds apart from, say, the bale insubordination of an Ana Torrent in ... *Cría cuervos* (Saura 1976). (Evans 2004, p. 135)

Certainly, the liminal, in-between identity of Marisol as the orphan child figure is consistent with the nature of orphan children in Spanish society at the time. Edging away slightly from the domain of the heteronormative nuclear family in her autonomous quests, the protagonist, nonetheless, harbours a desire for familial reunification and a yearning for family members lost. Similarly, whilst the Spanish government was keen to promote the image of a modernized Spain, conservative and Catholic values built around the nuclear family unit prevailed, evidenced by policies which rewarded large families and by the illegality of divorce and birth control.

Nonetheless, the Marisol films constitute one of the first examples in Spanish cinema of a child beginning to disrupt the dominant ideologies of Francoism, exhibiting flashes of dissidence and raucous disruption throughout the film. In the chapters that follow, I will trace several iterations of the orphan child character, considering two films from the period of democratic transition in Spain and a film from the contemporary period. The chronological organisation of the chapters allows the thesis to trace through consecutive chapters the shifting representations of childhood and orphanhood in Spanish film. In the next chapter, the clock winds forward to another pivotal moment in twentieth century Spanish history, 1976, and to *Cría cuervos*.

Chapter Two: The Powerful Gaze: The Child Orphan in Spanish Cinema of the Transition – *Cría Cuervos* (Saura 1976).

Carlos Saura's feature film *Cría cuervos* (1976) is one of the principal films of the *cine de la oposición* and the cluster of filmmakers working with the renowned producer Elías Querejeta.³⁷ Released in 1976, a year after the death of Dictator General Francisco Franco, the film presents the experiences of three sisters following the death of their parents. As the siblings transition to life with their strict and overbearing aunt, Saura also exposes the impacts of a rapidly changing Spanish society on the world of the child protagonists. Ana (Ana Torrent), and her sisters Irene (Conchi Pérez) and Maite (Maite Sánchez), find themselves in a world of death, sex, violence, and political changes; adult concerns that work their way into their lives as a result of familial breakdown. Despite this, the girls are not rendered as mere victims or passive onlookers. As demonstrated in the Introduction, much scholarship has previously focused on Ana's silent and absorbing gaze. Some interpretations of Ana's gaze offer a rendering of passive victimhood and witnessing, and much has been written on the supposed 'innocent gaze of saucer-eyed little Ana Torrent' (Thau 2011, p. 132). Analysis has tended to read her orphanhood as a metonym for societal suffering, understanding from Torrent's performance that 'to be an orphan is a metaphor for an existential void, a state in which one suffers the painful effects of the absence of an authority figure (familial, cultural, and national)' (Russek 2012, p. 135).

In this chapter, I present a counterargument to the idea that the gaze of Ana is that of a passive subject, witness, or helpless orphan child (Kinder 1983, p. 59; Keene 2016, p. 103) through a reframing of orphanhood. To do so, I first examine Ana's figuration as an orphaned child in the narrative, alongside a rehearsal of the film's narrative. The reading of the film that follows applies concepts presented in the methodology, including the magical gaze, playspaces and looking upon death. In the first instance, the chapter offers a brief foray into the historical and social context relevant to the time of the film's release.

Historical and Social Context

The death of the dictator General Francisco Franco in 1975 meant that Spain was a newly orphaned society in 1976, the year *Cría cuervos* was released. The economic modernisation that was

³⁷ There are some problems with the term New Spanish Cinema and for this reason I do not use the term. The first NCE was initiated by Garcia Escudero legislation in 1962 (and the VCE arose as a co-term).

discussed in the previous chapter and the change in Spanish citizens' mentalities occurring during the 1960s were building towards this broader period of transformation in Spain. In the late 1970s following Franco's death, stirrings towards the democratization of society were spilling across into the main political arena. His death signalled the ushering in of an era of liberation in a general sense, following the many years of repression that the regime had instigated back in 1939.

The film's release fell between several key political moments during the closing years of the Franco regime. With approaching democratisation, the assassination of Carrero Blanco in 1973 and the death of Franco himself in 1975, the winds of change, which arguably began with the economic development plan in 1959, were blowing strongly through Spanish society.³⁸ The first free elections since the Civil War in Spain, held in 1977, began to consolidate this. *Cría cuervos* is no exception to Saura's tendency in the earlier part of his oeuvre to charge the content with defiant youth figures. His film *Deprisa, deprisa* (1981), for example, painted the bleak picture of the impacts of youth unemployment and poverty on a group of teenagers and was banned multiple times by the censors. With the arrival of economic liberalisation in the 1960s and the reappointment of García Escudero as the head of the Dirección General de Cinematografía y Teatro in 1962 the once heavy chains of censorship were gradually loosening. In 1963, Escudero set out the 'Normas cinematográficas' (Rules of Cinematographic Censorship) that explicitly listed prohibited subjects, such as any slander of the church and forbade 'the validation of divorce as an institution, of adultery, of illicit sexual relations, of prostitution, and of anything harmful to the institution of matrimony or the family' (Molina-Foix 1977, p. 48). Another milestone in the dismantling of censorship followed the death of Franco in 1975, though its abolition in 1977 (when it was replaced by a rating system) meant it 'withered considerably but did not entirely disappear' as only some of the more 'rigid prohibitions of specific themes were lifted' (Higginbotham 1988, p. 15).³⁹ Escudero's reforms and the state funding of New Spanish Cinema (NCE) meant that Saura's work was already receiving critical acclaim on the international scene, taking up space in film festival circuits and art house cinema screenings. NCE films were not circulating in the same way in Spanish box offices, however, and received limited release nationally. Internationally, NCE films were involved in 'altering the image of Spain in the eyes of international observers' (Faulkner 2004, p. 652). This then played a role in censorship: as Rob Stone notes, Saura's *La prima Angélica*, released three years before *Cría cuervos* in 1973, had 'barged through the state censor with

³⁸ The technocracy was seemingly focused on infrastructural change rather than real political change.

³⁹ As Higginbotham rightly points out, forms of censorship that still exist in Spanish and contemporary societies today are the rating systems. For a more in-depth look at how rating systems enact censorship see Kirby Dick's *This Film is Not Yet Rated* (2006). Although it is a rating system for protection of children, it can also be seen as a form of political censoring.

international backing' (2002, p. 110). Although *Cría cuervos* was subject to censorship as it was released in 1976 before it was officially abolished, Saura and producer Elías Querejeta had powerful international backing which enabled them to get productions passed by the censors.⁴⁰

At the time of the film's release in 1976, the family model in Franco's Spain had already undergone significant evolution. During the *los años de desarrollo* (years of development), women had begun to seek paid extra domestic work and more and more Spanish women were looking to balance paid employment and motherhood (Brooksbank Jones 1997, p. 90). As explored in the previous chapter, they would face obstacles and resistance, which is what we see played out between Ana's mother who longed for a musical career, and her father, who seemingly required her to do domestic work: raising children and keeping home. Here, we find the conservative, Francoist view of womanhood as motherhood and a challenge to this school of thought. The chapter moves now to outline its critical approach.

Critical Approach

Children's Geographer Owain Jones articulates the importance of taking into account the otherness of the child, in order to understand that their agency can be claimed in ways that we may not necessarily note when applying adult ideologies (Jones 2013, p. 5). I propose that through the application of illuminating paradigms from the fields of Childhood Studies and Children's Geography we can rethink notions of passivity around the orphan child. With this in mind, this chapter seeks to unravel some of the limitations in viewing the orphan child of these fictional narratives as merely an onlooker and to bring to the fore the emancipatory actions of the protagonist. Whilst we do see the subjugation of women and children in *Cría cuervos*, we can also identify modes of resistance and examples of dissidence in the actions of the protagonist. This chapter shifts the focus to the spaces taken up by women and children in the narrative. 'Saura gives the women and children depicted in his film the space to position and re-position themselves again in regard to the regime that controlled and shaped them' (Duque-Anton 2017, p. 40).

In this section, I will briefly review the chapter's structure and some key theoretical concepts employed in my critical approach. It is my contention that through the incorporation of these diverse lenses, we can begin to rethink some previously limited analytical positions on the child protagonists. As in the previous chapter, I structure my analysis of the film by dividing the narrative into four main acts. Working through the film chronologically, the chapter presents a close reading

⁴⁰ Censorship was abolished in the country in the Spanish Constitution of 1978 (Díaz-Cintas 2019, p. 188).

of key scenes in each of the acts and develops an analysis which is informed by the theoretical notions.

One key concept that we may discuss in relation to *Cría cuervos* is Magical Thinking (Thomas 2014, p. 59). From the very opening scenes of the film, Ana is found in mysterious, dream-like sequences, including when she opens the refrigerator to find a bowl of chicken's feet. Ana's gaze swings between reality and fantasy, the result being that we are never quite sure what is real. The chapter will demonstrate how Magical Thinking (Thomas 2014, p. 59) contributes to Ana's agency. Moreover, Ana employs Magical Thinking in order that her imagination equips her with control, as I will demonstrate in the subsequent analysis. I will argue that she does so in an act of resistance to what Giroux has labelled 'disimagination', insidious power structures which dissuade citizens from thinking critically and imagining new modes of living (Giroux 2013, p. 258).

Further key elements of the narrative for my analysis include the photograph and the scrapbook, devices that make several appearances in the film. From them, we are able to observe the changing structure of the Spanish family and Ana the orphan child's turn away from the constraints of this, at times, imprisoning structure. With the inclusion of the scrapbook, I will demonstrate how the children reframe images of family and women and make use of editing as a mode of expression and control.⁴¹ The photograph also responds to the theory of postmemory, defined by Marianne Hirsch as the 'transmission of striking and sometimes traumatic memories to the second generation of a family or community' (Hirsch 2008, p. 103).

Ana's interest in death also becomes a way for her to turn away from notions of innocence and passivity that child characters are stereotypically used to connote. I will explore how Ana refutes notions of futurity often associated with the image of the child. Finally, I consider how the child protagonists can claim their own literal and virtual space, often re-appropriating adult spaces to become the heterotopic playspace (Randall 2014, p. 215) which can afford them a kind of spatial agency. In the writing that follows, I will examine how Ana is introduced as the orphan child and the notion of Magical Thinking, with due reference to the film's setting. (Thomas 2015, p. 59)

1. Down the Staircase

Cría cuervos begins with an opening credit sequence which presents the child Ana (Ana Torrent) to the spectator. Images show her family and life through photographs. This initial introduction is followed by a long shot of Ana the child at the top of a large staircase. These are the visuals which begin this first act of the film, and in the present section I offer a close reading of key scenes from

⁴¹ Images of the family album can also be seen in *La criatura* (de la Iglesia 1977).

this first act. The examination considers the presentation of orphanhood through cinematic establishment of the protagonist and also the film's distinctive temporal structure. Additionally, I reflect on the setting of the gothic structure as a backdrop to Ana's Magical Thinking.

In an early and thus influential reading of the film, Marsha Kinder notes of Ana that 'her pale oval face and slender birdlike frame create a fragility that also marks her as a victim - a delicate instrument for the registering of pain (Kinder 1983, pp. 59–60). Stuart Davis has built on this and stresses that she is a 'recently orphaned child...lacking knowledge of mortality, despite her recent emotional proximity to loss and death' (Davis 2020, p. 129). Whilst acknowledging these readings, I maintain that we can also note Ana moves beyond being a 'victim' who is 'lacking knowledge' to stress her comprehension of the stifling regulation of her changing environment, and her dissident reluctance to conform to its constraints. Jessamy Harvey, in her consideration of *Marvelino pan y vino* (Ladislao Vajda 1955), expands on the notion of the adorable child orphan figure in a way that is pertinent to *Cría cuervos* also. She states that it is a figure 'charged with symbolic potential, as a trope of the ultimate vulnerable child' (2004, p. 68). Moreover, she points to the possibility of reformulating this orphan trope. Whilst one could argue that reading orphaned children in Spanish film through the binary of victim versus agent might seem simplistic, I strive to progress this possible reformulation and point out nuanced examples of the child orphan's subjectivity in this film and the multifaceted nature of their engagement with their surroundings, and find ways to read the film that suggest the child protagonist functions as more than a cypher for a national victimhood.

Yet, it is important to consider that the orphan child Ana in *Cría cuervos* could be limited when defined by her identity as an orphan. This is because orphan protagonists often appeal to structures typically used in the bildungsfilm.⁴² This could be applied to *Cría cuervos*. However, I will argue that the film instead succeeds in depicting the determined, agentic orphan child. The young protagonist of *Cría cuervos* certainly navigates her way through a changing world and this chapter will expose the ways in which she is not rendered passive. The orphan, in this narrative and in numerous other films of the New Spanish Cinema, also speaks to a recurring feature of Spanish film that Marsha Kinder has termed 'The Children of Franco' (1983). Directors, including Saura and Borau, were themselves children growing up in the prime years of the dictatorship and, as a result, the orphan child of these films takes on a double role. First, it is a symbol of the directors' own experience of oppression during the regime and second, it is a symbol of Spanish society on

⁴² 'Bildungsfilm' comes from the term Bildungsroman. Furthermore, the Bildungsroman narrative would often focus on a young man making his way in the world, so it is pertinent that we find a young girl instead.

the edge of huge national political change. In her musings on the directors, including Saura, Kinder asserts that they are the 'children of Franco, who bear the crippling legacy of Francoist cultural repression':

They were led to see themselves as emotionally and politically stunted children who were no longer young; who, because of the imposed role as "silent witness" to a tragic war that had divided country, family and self, had never been innocent; and who, because of the oppressive domination of the previous generation, were obsessed with the past and might never be ready to take responsibility for changing the future. (Kinder 1983, p. 58)

Kinder's views on the link between directors and their childhood biographies, as expressed here, are useful when we are thinking about the context of production and reception of the films. What I argue against, however, is the interpretation of stunted children as silent witnesses. Surely, through the very act of dissident filmmaking, directors like Saura reject the option of watching and remaining silent. Ana can be viewed as a further extension of this negation, as demonstrated by the way she navigates her changing surroundings. She casts a critical eye on them as she transgresses boundaries. The filmmakers themselves are able to work out their own agency through the creative expression that filmmaking offers. Ana's own subjectivity and autonomy, though, can also be detected in her endeavours in the narrative and her femaleness serves as another argument against viewing her only as an avatar of Saura.

As Spain moved into a period of liberalisation in comparison to the decades under the dictatorship, we can also trace this questioning of the very pillars of Francoism within cinematic narratives. We see this questioning of societal structures depicted in *Cría cuervos*. The child Ana looks upon the patriarchal structure that entraps the women that surround her, and practices forms of dissent from these expectations, engaging in practices of play traditionally upheld as for boys, as this chapter will explore. With the loss of her parents, much like Spain with the loss of the authority figure of Franco, Ana is the active spectator of historical change. In this way, she is the child seer, watching and observing historical shifts, but also changing along with these transformations (Martin-Jones 2011, p. 73). I believe that Ana's move from the potentially passive child seer to the autonomous, dissident orphan child can be detected through a framework that includes Magical Thinking, playing with the photograph, a fascination with death and the re-appropriation of space. Some commonalities between these behaviours can be seen when we group them together under the umbrella of play.



Figure 25 "In Poland the poster for the film depicts a forlorn and jaundiced Ana with her deceased pets, emphasising the film's focus on childhood and orphanhood" (Prout 2005, p.153) ⁴³

In order to consider Ana's role, we should first contemplate the plot of the film, the events and characters. Much as with Marisol in the previous chapter, Ana's status as an orphan is a key element of the narrative. From the opening scenes of the film, the viewer is made aware of Ana's own memories of family life with her mother, thanks to the montage of family photograph albums. Following this opening montage, the narrative then moves to a scene in which we see Ana witnessing the supposed death of her father. As she appears at the top of the staircase in what seems to be a dark and eerie section of the house, dressed in a flowing white nightdress, we can again note hues of the gothic, foreshadowing the subsequent events of the film that encompass themes of death, sex, haunting, and the erotic. When Ana moves into the room where she is to witness the Freudian primal scene, we, as spectators, can already note the free will to move about the house and the desire to investigate that orphan Ana embodies; a stark contrast to the previous iteration of the orphan that was the all-singing-all-dancing Marisol, discussed in the previous chapter. In these early scenes of the narrative, Ana observes her father with a woman who is presumably his lover. His sudden death in his bedroom means that his lover flees the room, bumping into Ana as she hastily exits the house. These striking, early experiences of being witness to sexual intercourse, death, romantic relationships, and the placement of the child orphan in the frame, speak to the time of gradual liberalization of Spain. Saura sets out the conventional, Francoist idea of the nuclear family unit, then questions it by exploring dissident desires and the emancipatory interactions of the orphan child figure in the realms of play and fantasy. This also

⁴³ This image that foregrounds the anti-fascistic potential of the film, that is, the content that would render the film acceptable behind the Iron Curtain. Ana is like a resistance hero here.

points to the overlap between the single patriarchal family to which Ana belongs, and the state-level patriarchy that was Francoism; pulling the curtain on the infidelities of the one is to expose the other as well.

In *Cría cuervos*, Ana and her sisters re-enact and remember arguments that took place between their deceased parents. Symbolism has previously been pointed out in scholarship focused on flashback scenes of Ana's mother and father arguing; the authoritarian father representing Franco, the fragile, declining mother, the nation under the dictatorship (Bentley 2008, p. 60). Saura's film demonstrates that even in the early moments of democratic transition in the 1970s, creatives were already thinking about the future in a post-transition Spain. This is evidenced by the monologues to camera by adult Ana (Geraldine Chaplin), situated in the 1990s. This projection into the future serves as an intriguing link to *Estiu 1993* (see Chapter Four), given the presentation of the consequences of the excesses of the generation of *La movida*. In some respects, we can note that the visual representation of the forms of isolation often stereotypically associated with the status of orphan is emphasized in the film. Saura disrupts scenes of Ana adjusting to life following the death of her parents with flashbacks that show her fond, but sometimes traumatic, memories of her mother. Serving to underscore the deep connection that the two had and the consequent grief of Ana, this narrative structure, continuously switching between temporalities, speaks to the uncertainty of Ana's own future 'biography'. The death of Ana's mother is accentuated by the delayed narration, or rather the interjections of the now adult Ana of 1995, who recounts these memories of her childhood (Smith 2007, unpaginated). The mother-daughter relationship is also underscored by the casting of the same actress to play both Ana's mother and Ana as an adult looking back. We are able to observe, thus, Ana's childhood experiences of orphanhood, but also her adult conclusions about that time of her life. One of the lines most cited from the film in scholarship on the theme of childhood and memory is spoken by the character of adult Ana: 'Yo recuerdo mi infancia como un periodo largo, interminable, triste' (I remember childhood as an interminably long and sad time).

Seemingly, this would suggest a validation of readings of Ana as the traditional sad child orphan. Despite this, the child Ana seems to revel in this kind of solitary melancholy and negotiates and appropriates spaces to resist the suffocating patriarchal power structures and the encroaching swell of grief. Wright has described the pockets of intimacy, play, and memory that the young orphans occupy in these different temporalities as 'interstitial spaces of childhood', an idea to which I will return (2017b, p. 191). The status of Ana and her sisters as orphans allows them to occupy these interstitial spaces, using them both to work through their loss and to realise the advantages of this shift away from the somewhat stifling constraints of the nuclear family unit,

deriving from National Catholicism. Having now outlined the context of the film and presented an overview of the character of Ana, I turn to consider how Magical Thinking is presented in the film.

In *Cría cuervos*, the audience views the world through Ana's eyes and, often, her perspective blends reality with fantasy. As Saura allows us into the world of Ana's imagination, he pivots between the harsh realities of her childhood and the creative agency of her daily life. These instances, such as her creation of toxic poisons or her flashbacks to times with her mother, contest any notion that Ana is resigned to passivity in the face of a traumatic childhood. As we unpack her interactions with poison and death, with flying and dreaming, we can begin to note how she harnesses imaginative practices, bending reality to her own ends. In this section, I apply the theories of Magical Thinking and disimagination in order to bring Ana's power to the surface. The concept of Magical Thinking has previously been explored in visual Hispanic Studies by Sarah Thomas (2014) in her analysis of *Las malas intenciones* (García-Montero 2011), a Peruvian film. Thomas' insights on Magical Thinking as agentive actions illustrates my filmic analysis in the section that follows. The young protagonists in *Cría cuervos* also harness Magical Thinking as ways to assert their own, imaginative agency. Thomas defines Magical Thinking as the child's turn to the 'imaginative realm to negotiate alternative forms of agency' (2014, p. 59). I evaluate Ana's actions through the theoretical framing of Magical Thinking that works to counteract what Giroux has dubbed 'disimagination', as I will subsequently explain. Specifically, I have opted to analyse narrative elements and individual scenes. Firstly, I deal with her 'poisonous' bicarbonate of soda concoction. Secondly, I unpack the scene in which she imagines herself taking flight. Finally, I examine her phantasmic interactions with her mother.

It is important to acknowledge this potential of a radical imagination, that, in Giroux's application, works against the politics of disimagination (2013). Giroux asserts that the 'disimagination machine' is a discourse produced by institutions and structures of power 'that functions primarily to undermine the ability of individuals to think critically, imagine the unimaginable, and engage in thoughtful and critical dialogue' (2013, p. 263). He argues that the discourse circulated by these facets of power encourages disengagement and lack of questioning or thinking critically by the public. Imagination and creative thinking, in this light, are the first steps towards critical thinking in the public sphere and engagement in processes of social change that question the status quo. I propose that we can view Ana's rebellion in the light of this theory. Giroux's thinking on this subject (2013) supports my hypothesis that Ana's imaginative, creative thinking bestows her with a certain power. That is, it establishes the foundations for the possibility

of change, resistance, and challenge to the repressive elements of patriarchal, fascist Spain that remain in Ana's world towards the end of the dictatorship.

I analyse the potency of Ana's Magical Thinking as I believe it offers an alternative path of interpretation that steers away from what Thomas has outlined as 'the potential for fetishizing the child as an innocent, pre-subjective "other"' (2019, p. 67). Representations that derive from this potential illustrate a key problem in visualising childhood, and, consequently, for depicting orphanhood. This kind of fetishization is amplified and overdetermined further in the case of the orphan child. The idea of intrinsic sadness often associated with the orphan is also important to reconsider. As we saw briefly in the literature referenced in the introduction, Dan Russek has asserted of Hispanic cinema that 'the orphan is also closely associated with the image of the unhappy child' (2012, p. 136). This apparent unhappiness is then linked to the idea of stasis and political pessimism. Nonetheless, writing on Italian neorealist cinema, Lorenzo Borgotallo suggests that 'the orphan child functions as a powerful dual symbol of crisis and renewal, capable of subverting the status quo' (2017, p. 125). It is this subversion of the status quo that I think we can perceive in Ana's on-screen navigation of her world.

The young protagonists in *Cría cuervos* also harness Magical Thinking as ways to assert their own, imaginative agency. Thomas defines Magical Thinking as the child's turn to the 'imaginative realm to negotiate alternative forms of agency' (2014, p. 59). There are a range of scenes in which we see this kind of negotiation in Ana's actions. A notable example is Ana's belief that bicarbonate of soda is a poison which she can use to murder her overbearing father, and later, her controlling aunt. Finally, she offers it to her mute Grandmother in order to help her end her life. In these scenes, we see Ana's attempts to control the adults that form part of the oppressive nature of her world. Believing that she has successfully done away with her authoritarian father with the poison, Ana later attempts to guide her unforgiving aunt to the same fate by lacing her drink with the powder. The instances analysed here have a link with death, and in fact, begin to articulate cinematically the child's relationship with, and understanding of, death and dying. As we will see, Ana's thoughts are implied at points by visual cues and editing. D'Lugo goes as far as to state that 'the motif of death clearly obsesses Ana' (1991, p. 129).

Returning our attention to the opening scenes, we are reminded that Ana stumbles upon the death of her father in his bedroom, following a late-night visit from his mistress. As Ana situates herself at her father's bedside, the camera pans upwards from the lifeless expression of her deceased father towards her blank and seemingly emotionless expression gazing upon him. Scanning across the room, she looks to identify what we later realise is what she believes to be her

poison—and which in fact is merely bicarbonate of soda. Through Saura and the Director of Photography Teodoro Escamilla's carefully plotted cinematography and camerawork, we follow her gaze. We are gradually entering the world of Ana's thoughts, interpretation and imagination. A tracking shot then follows Ana, with the camera then moving backwards as she makes her way out of the room, the now empty glass in hand. The audience follows her through the dark, gothic house. Ann Davies has noted how the gothic house in horror serves to refract the 'decadence of aristocracy and wealth, the corruption of the patriarchal system and the failure of middle-class aspiration' (2019, p. 641). She goes on to establish that the haunted and/or gothic house has become even more commonplace in Spanish film as a metaphor for the national traumas of Spain. I agree with Davies' pertinent point that the overuse of this symbolism by filmmakers and critics can lead to our overlooking of other points of tension.

Despite the recurrence of the gothic house in fictional narratives, the building we see in Saura's film also works to highlight Ana's navigation of an adult-centric world that is, at times, something of a mystery to her. The house is a backdrop to this Magical Thinking that reminds viewers of children's struggle to establish their autonomy and agency. In this case, it is a background that amplifies the mystical concoction of her poison. Hence, in her on-screen trajectory, Ana moves from the monster's friend in *El espíritu de la colmena*, to becoming the Dr Frankenstein character herself in the later film. In these opening scenes, we are also presented with Ana's first oneiric encounter with her mother's ghost. Whether a flashback or a haunting, Ana is the only recipient of these phantasmic visits. This suggests that her own imaginative, Magical Thinking offers her the chance to bring back her mother for frequent visits that fuse reality with dreams. The gothic house, then, is an ideal background for these acts of Magical Thinking. Another salient image in the film is that of the family unit and family portrait, an idea that I turn now to unpack in the following section.

2. Family Portraits

The perspective of the orphan child and the image of the family unit intertwine most explicitly in the inclusion of photography in the film.⁴⁴ In *Cría cuervos*, the photograph becomes a powerful motif, the significance of which this section endeavours to demonstrate. I now direct my focus to the second act of the film, in which relationships between characters are established and Ana is shown exploring her family and memories. Saura employs the photograph to punctuate scenes of

⁴⁴ Saura's brother Antonio was an artist and photographer. Carlos Saura himself has returned to photography in later life. The film *Carlos Saura Photographer – Journey of a Book* (2017) documents work carried out to collate and present Saura's photographic work which documented 1950s Spain.

Ana following her mother's death as she spends time with Rosa the housemaid, her aunt, her grandmother and her sisters. This reflective tone around the photograph is set from the very beginning of the film; the story opens with a panning shot of the pages of the family photo album. As Kim asserts 'the family album constitutes an invaluable analytical tool for the study of contemporary Spanish history since the notion of the family underwent drastic conceptual surgery with the restoration of democracy' (2005, p. 25).



Figure 26 The Spanish Royal Family

Undoubtedly, the image of the family unit is still of great significance in contemporary Spanish culture. The Spanish Royal family, for example, continue to be viewed by most Spaniards as a largely positive component of Spanish life. According to a survey undertaken by the Spanish Centre for Sociological Research, only 0.1% of Spaniards view the monarchy as problematic.⁴⁵ This is especially surprising given the ongoing Catalan crisis. Posed images of the family have become almost a constant feature in glossy spreads in *¡Hola!* and in articles in broadsheet and tabloid newspapers alike (See Figure 26).⁴⁶ Essentially, they maintain their status as a role model family of sorts in current Spanish society and portraits such as the one reproduced in Figure 26 function to uphold their image. In her consideration of various family portraits from the early 1900s and the 1990s alike, Schnaith notes that

⁴⁵ Statistics summarised in the following article: <<https://www.larazon.es/espana/la-falsa-espana-republicana-solo-un01-ve-la-monarquia-como-un-problema-AN23844598>>

⁴⁶ This article from *El País* which seems to document the investidura /political block in selecting Spain's government in fact morphs into a recounting of the Royal Family's summer holidays: https://elpais.com/politica/2019/08/04/actualidad/1564940915_945788.html

Cabe resaltar que ninguna de las fotos es una instantánea, en todas <<se posa>>, o sea, <<se representa>>, en buena medida, la idea de familia que cada grupo sustenta.

(It is worth pointing out that none of the photographs capture a spontaneous moment, in all of them there is posing and representation, primarily, of the idea of family that each group upholds). (Schnaith 2011)

The family portrait is certainly a structured photograph in which the members, in most cases, the adults, can project the ideal representational image of the family that they, and/or the photographer may desire. We can consider the family portraits seen here (Figures 26, 27 and 28). In terms of memory, the inclusion of the photographs within the film can be analysed through the lens of Sontag and her work on the photograph as an act of violation, and Hirsch and her work on the self-representation of the family. In all the portraits seen here, the families stand posed. Where Figure 26 is a shot of the Royal Family following their summer holidays, Figure 28 is a state address from General Franco, featuring his wife and daughter and Figure 27 is a photo by Photographer Alberto García-Alix. This kind of self-representation of the family can be detected in all of the images. Hirsch states that

at the end of the twentieth century, the family photograph, widely available as a medium of self-representation in many cultures and subcultures, can reduce the strains of family life by sustaining an imaginary cohesion, even as it exacerbates them by creating images that real families cannot uphold. (Hirsch 1997, p. 7).

Further to this, the act of violation of the photograph can be discerned in how the children in each photograph are positioned and/or controlled. Even in the more modern family photo of Figure 27 (the bikers) we get the impression of a rabbit in headlights when we consider the child.⁴⁷ Returning now to the iteration of the family portrait that we find in *Cría cuervos*, we certainly find this genre of very posed, structured photograph picked out in the opening panning shots in the opening scenes of the film (see Figure 29). We are thus given this sense of the identity of the children being constructed around the central nucleus of the family unit, in a kind self-representation that the patriarchal figure presumably desired.

Patricia Holland examines family photographs in her essay “‘Sweet it is to scan’: Personal photographs and popular photography’ (2015). Regarding personal photographs she argues that they are made specifically to portray the individual or group to which they belong as they would

wish to be seen and as they have chosen to show themselves to one another. Even so, the conventions of the group inevitably overrule the preferences of

⁴⁷ Digital era has produced a legal dimension to such photos, too: there is much debate around whether parents have the right to publish pictures of their children on social media <<https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2016/may/08/children-sue-parents-facebook-post-baby-photos-privacy>>

individual members. Children, especially, have very little say over how they are pictured. (Holland 2015, p. 117)

This inauthenticity of photographs is especially relevant to the meticulously staged family portraits seen in the family photograph albums in *Cría cuervos*. In many of the family photographs posed for the camera, an adult gaze would seem to curate the poses, positions and looks of the children. We can apply this, then, to the girls-as-editors and their reclaiming of the image, instead directing their focus towards the images they select to showcase in their own scrapbook, simultaneously refocusing the gaze of the (adult) spectator on images pointedly selected by the orphan children asserting their voices, in place of the children in forced family poses and structures.



Figure 27 *Familia de bikers* (Alberto García Ali, 1990)



Figure 28 Dictator Francisco Franco, with his daughter Carmencita and wife Carmen Polo.



Figure 29 Ana and her parents in a photo from an album

Saura himself has noted how his inclusion of the photographs advances the idea that the Francoist model of the family was a casing for a tangled and complex power struggle and patriarchal oppression for the women and children that lived within the structure:

In my films I show the Spanish family, which was rigid, apparently standing still, and incapable of further development, even as one deceived oneself that everything was functioning wonderfully. (Saura and Willem 2003, p. 111)

Building on this, the child Ana's viewing of the photographs gives a greater relevance to the individual stories of the orphan child. The film begins with the family album but then moves to track Ana's own navigation of the world. We see in the photos the visual way children are viewed

as ‘aún legalmente unos ciudadanos de segunda’ (Still second-class citizens according to the law) (Pedreira Massa 1992, p. 218). In the photos in which she features alongside her mother and father, she is often posed and held in position. Along with the family albums presented in the film’s earlier scenes, a later scene features Ana’s grandmother viewing photographs from her past. Whilst her grandmother sits to take in the photos and the memories, Ana is unphased and observes silently. Both Ana and her elderly, mute grandmother are viewing the photographs, implicitly removing and distancing them temporally (they are photos of the past) and emotionally (they have both seemingly felt excluded from the familial structure).

To be sure, the presence of the photographs in the family albums means that, at times, we observe Ana viewing moments of her childhood captured on camera. The adult narrator Ana also reflects on the photos and her childhood. Whilst this kind of familial look (Hirsch 1997) might be interpreted as Ana’s desire to connect with the family featured in the photographs, these scenes may also call into question the hegemony of the nuclear Spanish family, or the nacional-catolicismo interpretation of the familial pose, a concept intrinsic to Francoist ideology. The vessel of the family was, in effect, utilized by the dictatorship as a way to police and control citizens, and encourage repopulation following the loss of citizens following the Civil War. This control was achieved via the Catholic Church through religious doctrine and the legal system through the Código Civil, which did not feature the wife’s judicial independence until 1975 (Oinonen 2008, p. 95). This rhetoric continued throughout the course of the regime. Indeed, ‘Franco’s rule persisted, in part, because he and his supporters associated his rule with what were thought to be “natural” or non-historical concepts such as God and the family’ (Munson 1996, p. 138). What place is there for an orphan such as Ana in this kind of societal structure? ⁴⁸ Again, her status as viewer of the photographs of a family unit that she once formed part of accentuates the possibility that she is now excluded from this microcosm of larger societal structures.

The discourse in Spain that surrounds both orphans and adopted children has tended to be dangerous (Román 2013). There seems to be a fixation on orphan/adopted children as abandoned children or victims in sociological and everyday rhetoric. Similarly, in her study of Spanish film *Marcelino, pan y vino*, Jessamy Harvey explains the following:

Children represent those who belong to the family, and orphans represent those who are excluded from this social structure...the family is imagined not only as a unit of stability within society but one of the principal regulatory powers, in

⁴⁸ Perhaps a kind of corrective play with dolls, encouraged by Rosa, the maid, and time in the kitchen is meant to address this.

charge of ensuring that the individual child's personality becomes continuous with the goal and means of society itself. (Harvey 2004, p. 64)

While, of course, the death of Ana's parents as the cause of her orphanhood differs from the idea of being 'given up', this is, nonetheless, still a dangerous discourse that infiltrates the life of orphan children. Quite the opposite of this is played out in the film and I argue that Ana is not an abandoned victim, rather a transgressive, curious child protagonist that challenges such discourses. Although the presence of the family album in the film underscores the significance of the family unit in Franco Spain, the presentation of the children alongside it also poses questions about this powerful microcosm. The photographs in the family album simultaneously function to highlight Ana's comradeship with her sisters, with photos often picturing them playing together or side-by-side. The inclusion of the family photo albums in the narrative, then, reinforces Ana's status as an orphan, but also accentuates Ana's enduring relationship with her siblings. Her adriftness, and existence in an environment lacking parental love and affection, emphasises the simulacrum, rather than the reality, that the family album represents.



Figure 30 Ana views photographs

Ana's viewing of the photos is also a form of resistance to patriarchy. The death of Ana's mother and her memories and flashbacks intensify cinematically Ana's longing for the maternal connection. She also pauses to contemplate photographs which predominately feature her mother. This concurrently underscores how Ana 'rejects the paternal legacy and historical time in favour of a return to the maternal embrace' (Harvey 2004, p. 72). Her rejection of the father and earlier desire to murder him signifies a rejection of the paternal legacy intrinsic to the Francoist patriarchal family structures. Other scholars, including Wright (2017b, p. 191), have also identified the connection between the photographs, memories and the desire for the spiritual maternal connection that Ana uses her imagination to project. Ana's focus on the photographs of her

mother and sisters, and on the photographs that her grandmother keeps, also signifies a further move away from the patriarchal structure of the nuclear family unit and a step towards female solidarity.⁴⁹

Saura's cinematic, photographic exploration and subversion of such traditionally Francoist familial structures is further emphasised by the colour palette and soundtrack. When we see the photographs in the family album towards the beginning of the film, the camera pans slowly across the pages, pausing occasionally to offer close-up shots in which the camera zooms in slowly to show Ana with her sisters and mother. The accompanying musical track is a sombre piano piece, composed by Federico Mompou. Most of the staged photographs of the family and the father are black and white or pale colours. As colour photography started to infiltrate domestic family photography in the 1960s thanks to Kodak consumerism, we see this transition as we move through the pages of the family album.⁵⁰ Nonetheless, the photographs in vibrant colours are of the girls at play. Paul Julian Smith has explored this link between photography and cinema:

More particularly in Spain, these developments had specific effects on cinematography: the expansionist 1960s were a time of increasing consumerism in which the middle class saw itself reflected in the vivid colours of advertising and the garish Kodak tones of the dominant genre of the period: the bourgeois, urban comedy. (Smith 2000, p. 34)

Smith, citing González Requena, then notes how cinematography of the 1970s rejected previous styles:

Rejecting both the 'granitic greys' of Francoism and the Kodak colourized consumerism, a new tendency emerges, which replaces plastic colours and TV kitsch with local landscapes in their diversity of texture and colour, with subtle, shaded, and warm tones, and with intimate, atmospheric, and metaphorical photography. (González Requena cited in Smith 2000, p. 34)

Through the use of these more intimate tones and colour palettes, Saura emphasises the subjectivity of the children in the narrative. As the camera pans across the pages of the family album, the colour scheme transitions from garish Kodak colours or grey, forced Francoist family portraits, to an almost faded, softer colour palette that encapsulates the sombre reality of the world in which the girls find themselves. Pointedly, the fading of pictures is another feature of analogue photography. The condition of the artefact begins to reflect its own historicity, and this fading also

⁴⁹ It is important to consider that the father would likely have taken the photographs. In the past, at least, the father would have the camera, and the mother would create the albums. There were no selfies (and thus no photographic autonomy) in the pre-digital era.

⁵⁰ Contrast was often poor because of slow film speed: it took a long time for the film speeds of colour film to improve. Kodak and Fuji introduced 35mm ISO 1000 colour film in 1983 (Manning 1983, p. 22)

points to the outdated nature of this family structure. Colours directly related to the girls, such as Ana's tendency to be dressed in a striking shade of red, burst through the dull coloured shots of the house and the landscape. We find a visual echo here of Marisol's striking red outfits matched with rebellious behaviour, as seen in the previous chapter. So, then, the film's chromatic design puts emphasis on the experience of the orphan children who lived through this rapidly changing political environment.

Later in the narrative, Saura presents the viewer with a scene of the sisters creating scrapbooks from photos in pages torn from magazines. In their creation of alternative albums, the girls play with their orphan status outside of familial structures. I propose that these photographs become 'powerful weapons of social and attitudinal change' (Hirsch 1997, p. 7) in discourses surrounding the Spanish orphan female child. These new photo albums are a way to move away from traditional structures of the family and instead carve out their own space. This kind of shift away from the family unit can also be detected in other Saura films, such as *Los golfos* (1960) in which delinquent Spanish youths form a gang in the suburbs of Madrid and *Pajarico* (1997), in which the children observe the adult family dramas through windows and from behind doorframes. I posit that the repositioning of these images equates to the literal deconstruction of the staged kin relations seen in family portraits. Arguably, they reveal the family structure as a paradigm that can in fact be reordered.

In the scene in which the sisters are collaging, we are shown a POV shot as a child's hand rapidly turns the pages of the scrapbook. The melancholy, yet significantly more upbeat pop song by British singer Jeanette 'Porque te vas' plays in the background. The colours of the cut-out images are vibrant, brightly coloured images of different women. Notions of gender and the roles assigned to women in a patriarchal structure become provocative elements of this sequence. More than making their own family album, the girls literally re-frame and re-appropriate photographs here, cutting and re-ordering various elements. This kind of editing process is also very filmic. The medium of photography is here associated with outdated Francoist patriarchal family; whereas the medium of film is associated with the next generation, who re-order and re-signify.

Photographs, up to this point, have also been linked to memories of the family structure. The shift away from this towards an alternative creation and collection of photographs articulates the sisters taking control of the narrative of their lives away from the power structure of the family. Collage has sometimes been a form of iconoclasm. We see a similar use of photographs in Saura's earlier film *La prima Angélica* (Saura 1974) as protagonist Luis looks through old photographs with his cousin Angélica to rekindle his memories. The scrapbook in *Cría cuervos* can be read as a site of

creation and a way for the girls to rethink and vouch for a revision of familial structures and predestined female identities. The individual images selected by Irene and Maite for the scrapbook are of substance. They are images of women from magazines, arguably, considering the magazines of the time, projections of the male gaze (almost certainly photographed by men).⁵¹ The girls dissect the magazines, cutting and pasting the images into their own book. We can interpret this as the girls 'editing' and 'cutting up' Francoist and misogynist projections of femininity and inventively creating something new.

This scene is also self-referential, as analogue film itself is a series of still photographs: 24 frames per second. Saura looks cinematically towards a post-regime future in which representations move away from tired structures of identities of women as intrinsically linked to the family and/or as sexual objects; objects of Mulvey's 'male gaze' and harnesses the medium of cinema to articulate this. In fact, women played fundamental roles in film editing and production that have been largely overlooked in scholarship on Spanish cinema, as demonstrated by the research of the 'Leading Women Project'.⁵² Extra-diegetically, the girls' editing reminds us of this erasure of women from histories of the Spanish film industry, particularly in the roles of many women as editors. These shots cast a spotlight on women and the editing process (see Figure 32). Self-referential cinematic scenes such as this mean the film is more nuanced than many viewers may believe on the first viewing.⁵³

Additionally, this specific scene could also denote the idea of Saura looking forward to a post-Franco future in which traditional family structures would begin to shift. Photography has been used to explore the changing family structure in Spain in an exhibition at the Instituto Cervantes in Madrid, entitled 'Retratos de familia. Miradas a las familias españolas del siglo XXI'. From June until September in 2009, the exhibition showcased 145 different family portraits with the aim of highlighting the 'profound transformation experienced by Spanish society in a short period of time' (Exposición: Retratos de familia: miradas a las familias españolas del siglo XXI, Instituto Cervantes de Madrid, no date). In the film, this transformation of the family structure is also

⁵¹ The men's magazines in *La caza* are an interesting point of comparison. In a troubling scene, the female child of that film, Carmen, looks at the soft-porn images and seems to imagine that they represent her future self. Saura returns to girls looking at images of young women, but here lets them, actively and cinematically, select and re-order, and thus re-signify and interpret.

⁵² More information on the project can be accessed on the website: <<https://leadingwomenproject.com/>>

⁵³ Martin-Márquez has investigated the editing work of women in the book section 'Strategic Auteurism' in *A Companion to Spanish Cinema*. (2013, pp. 152-189). The AHRC funded Leading Women Project is investigating the 'invisible leadership of women in 'below-the-line' roles such editing, costume design and production management' in 1970s television and film from Spain and Portugal <<https://leadingwomenproject.com/>>.

explored via the photograph. 'The girls' move away from the family photo albums towards the scrapbook images that they instead control, speaks not only to the shift that Saura perhaps envisioned would occur in terms of family structures, but provides comment on the self-representation of the family. I will now turn to consider how the female orphan child further asserts her voice as she navigates the boundaries of death and the murderous desire.



Figure 31 Black and white photographs from a family album



Figure 32 A POV shot of the girls' scrapbook

3. Death is Child's Play



Figure 33 Ana orders her sisters to die in a game of hide-and-seek

Ana and her sisters cut through traditional silences around the child's relationship with the context of death. Where the scrapbook becomes a site where the girls may critically assess ideas around childhood, orphanhood and womanhood, other spaces are carved out by them to reframe orthodox understandings of the child. This section analyses the third act of the film, investigating Ana's macabre game of hide and seek, her murderous desire and the burial of her guinea pig.

In one scene, the girls venture into the space of the garden to embark on a game of *El escondite* (hide-and-seek). This is a macabre version of the game, however, and upon spotting her sister, Ana demands 'te tienes que morir, ¡muérete!' (you have to die, drop dead!) Immediately, we can note how the dynamic plays with conventions around the figural child of the future. Ana plays out her seemingly sadistic murderous desires, but the sisters also play out the idea of their own deaths. Where the rhetoric of the Franco regime placed a great emphasis on the symbolic connection of the future of the child with the future of the nation, the children here, by contrast, become a twofold threat to this ideological use of child. Their status as orphans others them and positions them outside of this hegemonic structure of the family and their performance of their own deaths—playing out the death of the child—calls into question the romanticised notions of the child orphan prevalent in previous discourses. In this space, the child orphans can trouble predefined philosophies of childhood as a period of pre-subjectivity, before the transition into adulthood; they rupture this trajectory by figuratively running into and acting out death. In other words, the protagonists of *Cría cuervos* break with the conventions of innocence around the

Romantic child that have led us to fetishize the innocence of the child. Sylvia Paskin in fact states the following:

[*Cría cuervos*] has been much admired for its portrayal of the world of childhood, and nowhere is it more successful in this respect than in its evocation of the fluidity of the child's sense of the real and the imaginary, thanks to which death is largely devoid of the terrors which it inspires in adults. (Paskin no date)

Indeed, the girls play in a world in which the death, pain, and destruction experienced in a historical reality of fascism coalesce with fantasy and adventure. This game also plays out life and death and speaks to the turning point facing Spanish society. As the dictatorship came to its conclusion, Spanish society found itself at the beginning of the road to moving on from this era to a new phase of re-democratization, but at the same time, the wounds and trauma from the Civil War and dictatorship continued to haunt people in their day-to-day lives. The societal silence around the past continued. Ana's subjectivity is blended with this socio-political context, expressed through a POV pan shot, the camera swinging from left to right, as she looks around the garden in search of her sisters. She looks out at the landscape, but instead of seeking to tag her sisters, as in the traditional conventions of hide-and-seek, she instead orders them to die. As such, their game transforms into a mechanism for normalizing the process of death. Fascinatingly, hide-and-seek in children's development has frequently been linked to processes of reassurance and reworking by child psychologists (Israelievitch 2008, p. 60). Thus, the game functions on a deeper, more psychological level than might be assumed at first glance. This is also an instance of Ana openly using the verb *morir* (to die), something the adults decline to do for the film's duration.⁵⁴

Ana shows a murderous desire and, arguably, a destructive tendency that extends throughout the narrative and moves beyond the domain of children's games like *El escondite* (hide-and-seek). In one striking scene, Ana takes one of her father's guns and heads to the living room where she gives her aunt a chilling surprise. As her aunt's boyfriend approaches, intending to disarm Ana, he asks '¿Para qué quieres una pistola? Es un juguete de muchachos ¿No?' (What do you want a gun for? It's a boy's toy, isn't it?). Here, as he does throughout the film, Saura uses dramatic tension to underscore Francoist understandings of female roles and subjectivities. Ana's character makes repeated attempts to query these supposedly natural concepts of girlhood and play that are gender 'appropriate', just as Spanish society, in the 1960s and 1970s, began to interrogate the persistent gender inequality entrenched by the patriarchal regime. The shot contrasting Ana's wide-eyed, 'innocent' gaze with the violence of the gun calls into question stereotypical projections of

⁵⁴ This game also amenable to a reading informed by Freud's interpretation of child's play in *Fort-Da*.

childhood and feminine innocence and passivity. The director has commented on Ana's focus on death in the film in an interview:

Ana, the child, is not so much preoccupied with the theme of death as she is imbued with the feeling of having the power to kill, the power to make anyone she pleases disappear, and also the power to bring them back. (Saura and Willem 2003, p. 44)

Saura's comments here corroborate my reading of Ana's desire for death as bound up in a longing for a sort of control, rather than passivity. Ana's gaze upon death is featured in the very first scenes of the film, as we have seen. But we find another instance of her considering death when she views old photographs with the grandmother and offers her baking soda as a method of euthanasia. She then returns to her room to witness the death of Roni, her pet guinea pig. Her understanding of death seems to develop throughout the plot. Death fascinates her and does not seem explicitly to disturb her. We can read Ana's explorations of death as a further motive to reframe the idea of overwhelming loss and abandonment when we consider orphans. Ana's childhood is replete with traumatic loss, experience of death, and moments of shame and sadness. Perhaps this is why scholarship has frequently positioned her as a passive victim of her situation (Kinder 1983). The narration in one scene featuring the adult Ana confirms her feelings of desolation about her infancy:

No entiendo cómo hay personas que dicen que la infancia es la época más feliz de su vida. En todo caso para mí no lo fue. Y quizá por eso no creo en el paraíso infantil, ni en la inocencia, ni en la bondad natural de los niños.

(I can't understand people who say that childhood is the happiest time of one's life. It certainly wasn't for me. Maybe that's why I don't believe in a childlike paradise or that children are innocent or good by nature).

As I have explored, her actions as a child within the narrative demonstrate that she does not become passive in her reaction to this period of intense sadness, grief, and fear. This narration shows her disbelief in the innocence and natural kindness of children. Here we are reminded of limiting contemporary tropes surrounding our view of children. As I have outlined, Ana and her sisters subvert this traditional stereotype of the angelic orphan child frequently throughout the film and their presence can 'offer opportunities for transgression which usurp or ignore conventional modes of identification and expressions of sexuality' (Lury 2010b, p. 6).

In the scene which depicts Roni's burial, the cinematic editing makes use of the shot-reverse-shot technique again to depict Ana looking down on Roni's cardboard coffin sitting in a grave that she dug. The camera zooms in gradually towards Ana's face to present a close-up shot, establishing a close proximity between the spectator and Ana. Ana's smearing of dirt on her face has been

compared with *The Song of Bernadette* (King 1943), in which Bernadette does this in order to be closer to the soil upon which the Virgin had appeared (Scarlett 2014, p. 110). This scene evokes further religious elements, as Ana conducts a burial ritual to mourn the loss of her pet; this seems to parody the Catholicism so intrinsic to the regime's ideology. Ana's fascination extends beyond the abstract idea of death but also to the stages of mourning and ritual processes of marking the death. Far from being an innocent, passive orphan who is frozen by grief, Ana sets out to re-enact the funerals that she has experienced of her father and likely her mother, seeking to further understand the process.

In both *Cría cuervos* and *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* – a film that will be explored in the next chapter, the status of the child as an orphan and the presence of murderous desires towards parental authority figures are central concepts. Allegorical readings can be applied to both films too; the children coming to symbolise the infantilised Spaniards who felt orphaned following the death of the dictator. But in both instances, the orphan protagonists seize control of an identity that was fixed as inferior. Indisputably, methods of subordination were aimed at children throughout the dictatorship. The war itself was an ideological battle to decide the future of the nation of Spain and in the regime that followed, children, within the wider sphere of the family, were central 'targets of the repression' through processes that included: rehoming, state enforced adoptions, indoctrination, repatriation, 're-education', 'positive' eugenics, the internment of children with their mothers and familial segregation based on correct ideology (Richards 2005, p. 122). According to Richards, the segregation of children was enacted

by use of cultural measures: institutions of re-education, control of schooling, withdrawal from parents as primary agents of socialization, and even the construction of new identities by depriving youngsters of positive political, social and familial memories. (Richards 2005, p. 130)

As such, we can read both *Cría cuervos* and *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* as responses to this historical oppression. Orphans revolt against the new figures of authority that attempt to take the place of previous adult oppressors and take on murderous endeavours. Ana seems to be mesmerized by the topic of death and desires to expand her knowledge of death. This is evident in her conversation about euthanasia with her grandmother, her guinea pig's death and the morbid game of hide-and-seek with her sisters. Her perverse curiosity about death is not something which is explained; rather, it is returned to throughout the narrative and the spectator is able to consider this reoccurrence. Thus, Ana resists the taboo of death that is traditionally hidden from children by adults, subverting the expectations of the spectator.

A further example of morbid Magical Thinking is the scene in which Ana sees herself on the roof of the house and imagines herself taking flight into the sky (see Figure 34). The shot then transitions into a point-of-view shot as Ana flies through the sky. Where Ana's taking flight could be interpreted as the depiction of a morbid death drive, or of a wish to soar away from the constraints of her day-to-day life, I maintain that we also see here a return to the portrayal of Ana's imaginative realm, as she employs Magical Thinking, in which she plays with the limitations of reality. The high-angle aerial camera shot surveys the garden area offering a symbolic shot of the empty swimming pool, which emits an eeriness in its visual disintegration of decadence, and Ana's older sister Irene cycling through the garden on her bike. The sense of decay is accentuated further by the empty state of the pool despite the summer season. Undoubtedly, the inclusion of the empty swimming pool in the scene is of significance, a metaphor, perhaps, for the corruption of those who formerly gained from dictatorship and, in cinema, 'private pools are often deployed in critiques of the idle rich' (Brown and Hirsch 2014, p. 2). Prior to this taking flight, Ana is seen pushing her grandmother in her wheelchair through the garden. She pauses to look up at the sky and we are offered a POV shot of the sun reflecting off the branches of the trees, and Ana's gaze pans towards a view of her own self standing on the roof, staring down at her. The slow zoom brings the Ana on the roof into focus and then Saura uses shot-reverse-shot to depict the two Anas viewing each another. Amidst the cacophony of car horns tooting on the busy road in Madrid, the Castellana that runs past their garden, (*Cría cuervos* was filmed near Nuevos Ministerios) the Ana on the roof launches herself into air and the camera offers a swinging aerial shot of the Madrid skyline and garden. Crucially, Ana does not fall to her death but instead flies over the garden. Sarah Thomas, in her analysis of *Las malas intenciones* (García-Montero 2011), has noted that in that film the protagonist's frequent recourse to imagination bestows her with an empowerment that begins to spill over into reality (Thomas 2014, p. 54). As this chapter will later propose, this process occurs in Ana's narrative trajectory when she obtains one of her father's guns and points it at her aunt.



Figure 34 Ana gazes down at the garden below

It will be fruitful, next, to contemplate the idea of spatial agency and play as it is presented in the narrative.

4. Playing in Spaces

In films such as *Cría cuervos* and *La prima Angélica* through devices such as photographs, scrapbooks and hide-and-seek games, the children in much cinema of the latter years of the dictatorship ‘institute scandalous heterospatialities and heterotemporalities, which can be seen to challenge traditional histories’ (Randall 2017, p. 71). It will be important to analyse spaces, both literal and figural, in terms of identifying the agency of the orphan child protagonist(s). The spatiality of children’s experience has recently gained ground as a consideration in scholarship under the category of Children’s Geography. Spaces and places are ‘the social, economic and cultural context where people’s everyday practices are inscribed’ (Baylina 2011, p. 154). The children in this film find a space of their own within the adult-centric hierarchical place of 1970s Spain. Further to this, the film itself then becomes a space in which to consider the spatial agency of the orphan girls. This section will explore scenes which take place primarily within the final act of the film. I consider key examples of playspaces. Firstly, I study the movement of the orphan child through the landscape. I consider the game of dress-up and role play that has come to be one of the famous scenes of the film, and finally I assess the dance sequence in the playroom.

A great deal of the cinematography in *Cría cuervos* underscores the notion of encountering and claiming of spaces. Saura uses a distinct kind of focalisation to underline Ana’s perspective, employing various perspective shots throughout, including POV shots, shot-reverse-shot and behind the shoulder shots to align the spectator with her gaze. Lury has stressed that this kind of shot, especially in one that shows children’s movement, accentuates the transgressive nature of the child character (Lury 2010a, p. 288). In one scene, the adult Ana recounts her memory of going

on holiday to the countryside with her aunt and sisters. We are presented with a shot of Ana gazing from the back of the car, the clouds reflected in the rear windscreen encroaching on her image and speaking to her desire to wander free.⁵⁵ In fact, wandering and freely roaming in space has been associated with the liberation of women. Rebecca Solnit celebrates the act of wandering in the landscape and the cityscape and getting lost, positing that:

the shell of home is a prison of sorts, as much as protection, a casing familiarity and continuity that can vanish outside. Walking the streets can be a form of social engagement...but it can also be a means of inducing reverie, subjectivity, and imagination, a sort of duet between the prompts and interrupts of the outer world and the flow of images and desires (and fears) within. (Solnit 2015, p. 97)

This is true in the case of *Cría cuervos*. The gothic family home becomes a structure of entrapment – ‘gothic locations themselves are specific threats to liberty and autonomy’ (Kerr 2018, p. 234). We see this kind of gothic structure on film decades earlier in Buñuel’s *Viridiana* (1961). Although the house can serve as a foil to the desire for liberty, ‘gothic texts reveal the relational, subjective nature of children’s agency in a fruitful way precisely because they foreground structural barriers’ (Kerr 2018, p. 234). The contrast of the scenes in both the gothic house and the outdoor landscape speaks to this and stimulates our reading of Ana’s burgeoning agency. Solnit’s reading of wandering consequently ratifies my reading of this scene of movement. The image of Ana gazing backwards out of the window, alluding to her memories of her past, is followed by a POV reverse dolly shot of the road left in their wake, a shot that is not dissimilar to the famous shot of the children on the railway tracks from *El espíritu de la colmena* (Erice 1973), and looks forward to a similar shots in *El sur* (Erice 1983), and, indeed, the opening shot we see in *Estiu 1993* (Simón 2017), to be examined in Chapter Four.

⁵⁵ Comparable to *Walkabout* (Roeg, 1971)



Figure 35 Ana stares out the window of the car



Figure 36 Ana's view of the road behind them

The adult narrator Ana states:

De las cosas que recuerdo con más agrado, pocas pueden compararse con aquel fin de semana...aquel viaje, aquel viaje se me quedó grabado con tanta fuerza. No sé, me encontraba libre, nueva, distinta.

(Of the things I remember with most fondness, few can be compared to that weekend...that trip, that trip has remained with me. I don't know, I felt free, new, different).

The imagery illustrates this shift in Ana's feelings, as the children transition from the stifling structure of the dark and macabre house that encases their patriarchal family home to the open space of the countryside. Feminist children's geographers have demonstrated the ways that space is intrinsic to children's gendered experiences. The move to the outside arena for trips and play, such as hide-and-seek offers an escape from the gendered expectations present in the girls' home. As Prout states, 'the house seems to offer no escape from the mechanisms which condition little girls to make them become in their turn women like Amelia, Paulina, María and Rosa' (Prout 2005,

p. 153). Nonetheless, we frequently see the girls in more open and outdoor shots and frames, signalling their desire for a future change in gender roles. The end of the journey seen here in Figures 35 and 36 is consolidated by a panning shot of rolling green gardens as the camera moves slowly into a tracking shot that follows their car from a distance as it crosses the horizon. Again, this kind of transgressive movement and journey of the child character is something of a trope in child-centred cinema and we will see a similar transition when we consider *Estiu 1993*. In the case of Ana's journey, the moving shot and Ana's gaze out of the car window taking in the landscape can be seen to demonstrate her desire to move beyond the patriarchal space that so restricted her own mother, into the magical and playful space. The open space of the countryside also encapsulates her newfound feelings of liberation.⁵⁶

The symbolic space of play as a potential heterotopia and form of spatial agency will also be noteworthy analytical ground in contemplating Ana as the orphan child. To contextualise the importance of children's play in the Spanish setting, a survey published in 2010 demonstrated that the main activity that Spanish children identified with their free time was playing (Baylina et al. 2010).⁵⁷ Furthermore, hide-and-seek, a game featured in *Cría cuervos* was found to be the most popular traditional game 'cited by many girls and some boys' (Baylina et al. 2010). I have already examined the scene of hide-and-seek briefly in this chapter as Ana explores her fascination with death through the game, but it is also worth considering the game itself under the theoretical lens of spatial agency from the field of Children's Geography.

As noted in the introduction chapter, the idea of spatial agency comes into play in theories of Children's Geography through the idea that we can look at children's worlds 'through the lens of space and place' in order to 'open up new understandings of their experience' (Hackett et al. 2015, p. viii). We can apply this theoretical approach to our reading of playing in spaces in *Cría cuervos*. Moving to the open and free space of the garden, the girls transfer their experiences to a playing out of their experiences that they can control. As their game takes place in the vast greenery of the garden space, they are able to engage in play that moves away physically from the house as a walled constraint but also symbolically from the adults in their world as gatekeepers (Karooff 2015, p. 112).

⁵⁶ Nonetheless, the girls are taken to a privately owned *finca*. In this sense, they have a very privileged access to a space that is heavily coded with class.

⁵⁷ In relevant recent news, the media pictured powerful images of Spain's easing following the COVID-19 lockdown that documented children's experiences as they were permitted to play outside again. The country's emphasis on *la vida callejera* (Spanish society's strong preference for street life, café culture, and spending social time in outside spaces) means the importance of children's outdoor play is strengthened in Spanish culture. To view some of the photographs, see: <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/gallery/2020/apr/27/running-free-spanish-children-released-from-lockdown-in-pictures>>

The camera transitions from a shot that shows Ana in front of the walls of the house to a POV shot of the garden that swings from left to right, mimicking her gaze. This shot shows the natural space of the garden and the sisters appearing from behind trees. The game speaks to Ana's experiences of family members entering and vanishing from her life. Emphasising Ana's gaze as she stares down through the garden, the cinematography here functions to underscore the garden as heterotopic playspace and interstitial space (Wright 2017b, p. 191) in which children are able to exercise agency. In effect, the transitory nature of movement in hide-and-seek speaks to the transgressive, liminal nature of the children of the film, as they navigate a society that is very much on the move.

If we move from the outside space of the garden and instead turn our attention to scenes played out within the interior of the house, the sisters also find places to reclaim within the domain of the adult, framed explicitly by the walls of the 'adult' house. In one scene, the girls play dress up and take on the roles of their deceased parents. Through this playing out of a disagreement that occurred between their parents, the girls seem to use play to work through a kind of traumatic event in an attempt to make sense of their recent experiences with each other. This form of creative, sociodramatic play allows the girls to understand and explore the events of their past. They create a world that is somewhat between reality and fantasy. This kind of recreation is thus an example of socio-dramatic play.

Ana and her sisters play with the power dynamic and strained relations between their deceased mother and father. Through doing this, the girls also push the boundaries of the power structure dictated by their strict aunt. Dressing up in her clothes and playing the roles of adults in their lives, they are parodying the problems of adult relations. Sutton-Smith (2009) has 'drawn attention to the power rhetoric of play where children address issues of hegemony and hierarchy in their own right' (Lee 2015, p. 247). The girls question the power dynamic in adult-centric worlds and also the one between their mother and father. In the dialogue they play out, the father has been absent from the family home for a long period. The mother character, played by Ana, is wondering where he has been. The scene then develops into a marital dispute. Ana plays a defiant and combative version of her substantially more subdued and weaker mother who we have seen in previous memory sequences. On her return, her aunt breaks through the wall of the heterotopic playspace, something we will look at in the following section, and the creative play scene is brought to an abrupt end. D'Lugo has noted that this scene of play articulates Ana's

inquiry into the ways in which she can break out of the snares she identifies with both her family and her present condition as an orphan. Out of that inquiry the young child begins to discover her own strength and defiance to break away

from the emotional and even physical entrapment signified by the family.
(D'Lugo 1991, p. 133)

Ana is moving away from this kind of 'condition' of the orphan as an emblem of isolation and loss. Their play in this scene succeeds in raising questions about the nuclear family structure. The adult 'drag' and the sociodramatic play performed by the girls further succeeds in queering the normative structure that is 'the ideological bedrock that equates morality with mom, dad, and 2.5 children living in a private suburban home' (Oswald et al. 2009, p. 2). If we consider queer in the sense of that which differs from normative identities or narratives, we can find this playing of and with gender roles in *Cría cuervos* as a form of play which challenges heteronormative conventions and the othering of the orphan child.



Figure 37 Ana and her sisters dress up as their parents

Ana's playing of her mother as resistant and assertive to the machismo (represented by Irene playing their father) again seeks to question the assumed future roles of the girls as subservient women that will 'andar en casa con la pata quebrada' (meaning women should remain in the home, chained to the sink).⁵⁸ This dynamic affords the girls an agency often not perceivable in fiction that presents the orphan child. Through this scene of dress up and role play, the girls make a claim on the domain of the adult and further question the 'social script' that dominates it. This is articulated in the conclusion of the exchange that they play out in the roles of their parents:

IRENE: Yo solo te quiero a ti Amelia, aunque a veces mi paciencia tiene un límite.

ANA: Pero eso se va a terminar. Ya lo creo, que se va a terminar. Vas a saber tú quien soy yo.

⁵⁸ La pata quebrada in terms of leg-breaking is not literally translatable.

(IRENE: I am in love with only you Amelia, although sometimes my patience has a limit.

ANA: But that will stop. I know it now; it's going to stop. You going to find out who I am.)

This last line has a double meaning, in the sense that Ana is proclaiming, as she imagined and perhaps hoped her mother would, that she will assert and define her identity outside of the role of female housewife and orphan whose identities were dictated by the regime. This shows that the children are questioning these behaviours rather than learning to just perform them. This sociodramatic playspace and realm of the imaginary is where the girls' voices, and their sense of the inequality they have seen and experienced, are made manifest, and perhaps where they look to future change:

El conflicto entre el mundo infantil y el adulto es otra de las constantes del cine de Saura. Pero en este caso nos apunta que Ana de mayor no reproducirá los mismos comportamientos que su madre, algo está cambiando.

(The conflict between the worlds of children and adults is another constant feature of Saura's cinema. But in this case, it shows us that when Ana is older she will not replicate the same behaviour as her mother; something is changing).
(Yunta 2004, p. 161)

Hence, the girls occupy their own physical space of resistance in their playroom in the house. Here, they escape into the realms of creativity and art; scrapbooking, listening to music and dancing. In one notable scene, the girls are undertaking some of these creative practices in their playroom. According to psychologist D.W. Winnicott, playing is first something that happens in the interface between our inner world and external reality. Taking place neither strictly in our imagination, nor in the truly external world (i.e. all that is out of our control), playing happens in that space where our imagination is able to shape the external world without the experience of compliance, climax, or too much anxiety. 'In playing the individual is able to be creative, and in being creative is able to affect the environment and at the same time to discover the self' (Winnicott 1971, p. 54). Many of the scenes in *Cría cuervos* present creative play. This kind of play is one of the ways in which the protagonists can reach an understanding of the events unfolding in their immediate environments. In the scene, Ana puts on a vinyl on her record player as her sisters begin to scrapbook. The harmony of play is quickly interrupted by their aunt, who arrives to tell them she will be departing. This infiltration of the child's world by the adult is sandwiched each side by the music and creative activities of the young protagonists.

As the girls play and create scrapbooks in their playroom, we see a close-up shot of Ana sitting on the sofa. As mentioned, the song playing is 'Porque te vas' by British singer Jeanette. Of this

scene, Rob Stone has perceptively noted that ‘rejecting the inauthentic reality of photographs, Ana and her sisters make their own, equally real/unreal family albums out of magazine clippings, while Ana validates the fantasy with music’ (Stone 2013). Whilst the song, with the lyrics *Porque te vas / Because you are leaving* speaks most obviously to the loss and departure of her mother, Ana’s lip-syncing reminds spectators not only of the way children learn by mimicking, but also of Ana’s pursuit in (re)appropriation. Like the scrapbook, the recording of the song can serve as a memory of her mother that she now can control.⁵⁹ As Ana’s strict aunt requests that she stop the music, Ana stares sullenly as she listens to her demands. Following her aunt’s departure, Ana puts the music on once more and the girls begin to dance around the room. Again, the children employ the act of dance here, as I observed of Marisol in the previous chapter. The scene shows how their unruly bodies resist control through the creative expression of dance. Here, music also becomes both a way to pay homage to their mother and also a way to resist and defy the strict micromanagement of their aunt. This kind of play hints at radical potential:

As a site of intergenerational conflict, play signals the struggle between the old and the new, what has been and what might yet be, repetition of the same and the chance that this time things may be different. (Powers 2018, p. 721)

Conclusions

The closing image of the film is a panning shot of the roof of the children’s school as term begins again following the summer break. A religious cross can be seen on the Cuzco-based school’s rooftop, perhaps signifying the longevity of the nacional-catolicismo of the Franco regime (Martin 2010). An aerial shot focuses on the school in the central plane; however, the camera then pans slowly right to a shot of the skyline, pointing to potential hope as the country would then look to ushering in political and sociocultural change. This aerial panning shot is a visual reminder for the spectator of the earlier flying scene. Both scenes capture the sky and the world beyond the girls’ domain of the house and the school. In doing so, they communicate a desire for change and escape. The life of the child orphan Ana will continue in this new, changing world, but we are aware that she preserves a desire for change within, kindled by her practices of Magical Thinking. This alludes to a rupture in conventional narratives centred on the orphan, usually imagined as running into danger (Marisol) or saved by a divine being (*Marcelino, pan y vino*). Furthermore, this depiction breaks away from the orphan child of Italian neorealist narratives – ‘at the end of which the orphan

⁵⁹ The lyrics of the song are interesting in that they position the female subject as someone who is completely dependent for validation on the presence or absences of a male partner. The subject of the song is also infantilised: *Junto a la estación lloraré igual que un niño, porque te vas*. However, it does highlight the ‘power of the maternal connection’ (Wright 2017, p. 191), the strength of attachment through time and the power that can be drawn from it

protagonist decides to turn his back, either physically or metaphorically, on the conformist world that surrounds him' (Borgotallo 2017, p. 133). Unlike Italian Neorealist cinematic orphans, Ana is reintegrated into the world, but the spectator is made aware that she is ready to trouble it. As such, the emphasis is on the child's desire to assert control over their own future.

This chapter has explored the multidimensional ways in which the orphan children of *Cría cuervos* in fact assert their agency, seek to upset the dominant orders that structure their world and usurp conventional stereotypes surrounding the figure of the orphan. Saura employs impressive cinematographic techniques in the form of tracking shots and framing that work to underscore the subjectivity of the orphan child. Ana's fascination with death diverges dramatically from typical notions of childhood innocence, a stereotype that can be detrimental to the recognition of the child character's narrative agency. Instead, Ana challenges such notions and 'among the children, it is ostensibly Ana who resists conformity' (Keene 2016, p. 104). The lens of play has been a productive way to return to looking at this widely studied and critiqued film. It is my view that play has been somewhat overlooked as a vehicle by which orphan child protagonists like Ana can make sense of events and gain control.

I have examined how Ana is able to summon her mother and tries to bring about change in her world through Magical Thinking. I then turned to investigate the significance of the family portrait and the girls' reclaiming of the photograph, stepping away from rigid, hegemonic family structures. Ana's fascination with death was also dissected, as it runs in direct contrast to the traditional, romanticised image of the innocent child as symbol of futurity. This led us to look at the child's navigation of (heterotopic) spaces of play in the house and in the wider landscape. In short, this chapter has examined an array of types of creative play, kinds of play that I argue demonstrate that the child orphan transcends limiting definitions that confine the character to an emblem of victimhood.

In this cinematic era of the 1970s, then, does the child orphan become a way to critique the previously enforced ideas of familial unity? Saura's ambitions as a dissident filmmaker will clearly influence this, but following the liberalisation of society under 60s and 70s Francoism, could we also find changing attitudes of citizens towards the Spanish orphan child and typical family structures? With this film, Saura succeeds in encouraging us to question not only power structures of Francoist and Transition era Spain, but also the way we frame both childhood and orphanhood by questioning the overlooked, marginalised status of the orphan and adult tendency to subordinate the child. We see the children negotiating the structures that confine them and Ana's playful gaze shows itself to be more powerful than it seems at first glance

In this chapter I investigated elements of Ana's on-screen persona that exhibit her empowerment, beginning with Magical Thinking, as defined in the introduction chapter. In a turn away from Marisol's role as an orphan as seen in the previous chapter, Ana's fantastical gaze, deathly desires, familial memories and play all intersect with this cinematic notion of orphanhood. By examining these on-screen examples, we have seen not only how cinema reflects the changes occurring in the lives of Spanish citizens of the time, but also how it reflects back and intervenes in comprehension of political and social change. In the chapter that follows, I explore a film released in the very same year, *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* in order to examine its representation of the monstrous and powerful orphan child.

Chapter Three: Los huérfanos-monstruos and the reclaiming of agency in *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* (Serrador 1976)

Narciso Ibáñez Serrador is the man who did for children what Hitchcock did for birds, in *Who Can Kill a Child?* (1976) (Cairns 2015)

1976 saw the release of Narciso Ibáñez Serrador's now cult B movie *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* / *Who can kill a child?* ⁶⁰ This unnerving and gory tale of two British holidaymakers who find themselves on an island of killer kids is now widely regarded as an iconic Spanish horror film.⁶¹ The film presents children as a collective of deceptively sweet, bloodthirsty youths. The scenery and the sweltering heat of the fictional Spanish island serve as the unsettling backdrop to a scene where terror and violence will ensue. Serrador offers the spectator a horror movie that builds suspense and calls into question the preconceived notions we may have of the apparent innocence of the child. Strikingly, the film begins with a series of clips from documentary footage of children caught up in violent conflicts from across the globe. Footage from historical events including the Holocaust and the Vietnam war is played out for the viewer, in what Diestro-Dópido has called 'one of the most harrowing opening credit sequences in the history of cinema' (Diestro-Dópido 2011). The black and white footage makes at first for a marked and striking contrast to the vivid colour of the film—shot on Eastman stock—that follows; a disturbing story that explores the outcomes of a world in which parental authority is absent and where child's play becomes deadly.

¿Quién puede matar a un niño? chronicles the experience of a British couple Tom (Lewis Fiander) and Evelyn (Prunella Ransome) on their holiday to the fictional island of Almanzora. They later discover that a band of children have taken over the island, killing the adults and, in one famous scene, using the body of an old man for their murderous game of piñata. The film, a low-budget B movie, in fact was not easily accessible for many years until a re-release in 2007. Despite the notable lack of enthusiasm from critics at the time of its release, the film has gone on to gain critical acclaim in recent years, and scholars have latterly dedicated renewed attention to the film as one that can be seen retrospectively as pivotal in the landscape of Spanish horror film. In 2020 at the 'Festival de Cine Fantástico Europeo de Murcia', the Biblioteca Regional hosted an exhibition on the life and works of Serrador further pointing to a renewed appreciation of the horrormeister's work on the part of cinephiles and academics alike. Finally, the film was remade

⁶⁰ The director is commonly referred to by his nickname 'Chicho' in scholarship and on Spanish television.

⁶¹ Medina labels the film as 'un clásico indiscutible de nuestro cine' (Medina 2021)

in 2012 under the title *Come Out and Play* (Makinov 2013), further demonstrating the potency of the narrative. Interestingly for this study, Andy Willis has posed the question as to whether Makinov's remake 'attempts in any way to renegotiate Ibáñez Serrador's cultural and political ideas, particularly about young people' (2017, p. 61).

Thus, I propose that in the context of this resurgence of interest in the film, a reading which focuses on the power of the child orphans is not only timely but also original. Nonetheless, it should be noted that there has been an increase in the number of scholars turning their attention to filmic children in the past five years. Jessica Balanzategui, for example, has investigated how the children in the film constitute a mutation of the pure and innocent child of the traditional *cine con niño* (2018, p. 131), whereas Sarah Thomas takes the film as the starting point in her book which unpacks the otherness of the child in cinema of the Spanish transition to democracy (2019, p. 10). This chapter will build on these works and endeavour to provide a detailed analysis that focuses on the agency of the murderous youths.

¿Quién puede matar a un niño? continues to terrify audiences around the world. By returning to study this provocative Spanish horror film we can also continue to learn from its representation of the child orphan and how it impacts, and is influenced by, the ideology surrounding the child and the family that informed Spanish society at the time of release. In this chapter, I carry out an analysis of *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* which explores the depiction of the murderous orphan child and questions to what extent we can read agency in the actions of the children. I take into account the socio-historical context that surrounds the film's release whilst also drawing on recent theories from Childhood Studies. Following this, I study the socio-historical context of the film's release in order to consider how the film reflects on, and intervenes with, societal attitudes contemporaneous to its release. Furthermore, I question to what extent the orphan children characters turn away from filling a symbolic value as passive cyphers, to being legible within discourses about agentive capacity of the child, acknowledging their potential to be social actors engaged with the socio-political context.

Under this umbrella of orphanhood and agency, my examination is further divided into the sections I will outline here. After a brief overview of relevant events of the historical period in which the film was released, the chapter proceeds to an exposition of the film wherein I present a sustained close reading of the feature film, which I see as being comprised of four key acts. The acts are as follows: Prologue; Arriving in Almanzora; Child's Play and Epiphany; and Violent Climax. As such, my analysis moves through these acts and events in a chronological fashion

aligned with the narrative, and I inform my close reading with four principal (theoretical) concepts in the subsections of this chapter.

Under these headings, I firstly examine director Serrador's oeuvre in order to demonstrate the history of the child-centred focus of his work and to unearth what is unique to *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* I map this on to what I consider to be the first act of the film: the newsreel style prologue. I then move to focus on the hierarchies we find in the film, specifically when the holiday-makers journey to the island of children. I study how the film's events call into question the status quo and query the dynamic of the heteronormative nuclear family structure. The chapter then turns to survey the spaces occupied by the child orphans, both physically and symbolically, and analyses the motif of child's play that reoccurs throughout the narrative. I analyse this motif in line with the act of the film that features these deadly play sequences. I then investigate the idea of the horrifying child orphan, questioning how normative notions of the innocent child are turned upside down through the plot development devices. For example, devices such as jump cuts function as a visual correlate of security about childhood. The close reading here looks principally at the murderous climax of the film, but also at how these events have been foreshadowed in previous acts. My analysis applies a variety of interpretive paradigms drawn from psychoanalysis and other disciplines to open up a new approach to the film. I draw from concepts including the Real (Žižek 2005, p. 303) the uncanny (Freud 1919, p. 219) and heterotopia (Foucault 1986, p. 25). Before proceeding to examine these elements of the film, however, it will be necessary to review some important factors about the time in which the film was released.

Historical and Social Context

With the aim of providing a pithy outline of the key historical factors that will illuminate my reading of the film, this section will discuss historical violence, Spain's changing place on the world's political stage, economic growth due to the tourism influx, and, finally, the complex aftermath of Franco's death. Where the key sections of my analysis focus on the concepts of agency and orphanhood, a brief account of the country's political and social landscape in 1976, a pivotal year, will aid in situating my reading of Serrador's cinematic children.

Shot in 1975 and released in 1976, *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* was offered up to the world a year after the death of General Francisco Franco. Spanish citizens at the time had lived through decades of political violence, oppression, and surveillance during the dictatorship, following a bloody Civil War (1936-1939). This violent Real of history is incorporated into the film from the

outset, in the disturbing footage of global violence and war.⁶² Steinberg also contends that the tourist in Serrador's film undergoes an encounter with the Real of Spanish history under Franco (Steinberg 2006, p. 23). The violence against children seen in the opening scenes is counterbalanced with their brutality as we find them playing murderous games. This, in turn, is met with eventual violence from the adults, finally begging the titular question: who could be capable of killing a child? The extreme violence culminates with Evelyn's unborn child killing her from the inside. This recourse to a repeated cycle of violence can be interpreted as a critique of global war-based bloodshed whilst, simultaneously, scholars have read this portrayal of brutality as a statement about the need to represent and remember the inhumaneness that was characteristic of both the Civil War and the dictatorship.⁶³ Notably, Serrador declines to include actual historical footage of the Spanish Civil War. We could then read the film that follows the prologue as a kind of fictitious supplement about the consequences of the oppression of children during the conflict. That is to say, the events of the film can be read as an answer to this very meaningful omission in the prologue.

As I have noted in the previous chapter, the Spain of 1976 was arguably a society that was newly orphaned: the death of *El caudillo* the year before meant that ripples of cultural and political change were being felt across the country. The Cortes, along with then Prime Minister Adolfo Suárez and King Juan Carlos introduced the Political Reform Act in order to aid Spain in her transition from dictatorship to democracy. In the years before the transition, the economic situation in Spain had seen significant improvements. The Spain of the 1960s experienced prosperity with economic growth brought on by the 'opening up of the Spanish economy to foreign investment and trade, a movement symbolised by the law of economic stabilization in 1959' (Reher 1997, p. 273). This represented a golden period for consumer society. The *apertura*, and what is frequently referred to as *Los felices sesenta*, not only helped to make the ensuing transition possible but also facilitated the improvement of living conditions and social stability. William Chislett notes how the country was ripe for change and that Spain 'telescoped its changes into a much shorter period than probably any other European country' (Chislett 2015, unpaginated). As such, Spanish society was opening up economically and, to a certain extent, ideologically. Interactions with more liberal countries and accession to the UN in 1955, NATO in 1982, and the European Economic Community in 1986, laid the groundwork for later democratic and stable

⁶² According to Lacan and Žižek, the Real of history would be the authentic truth of history, and Žižek notes that the Real is what we see as true horror in horror film. The real Real resists any kind of symbolisation. This would fit with the viewer's encounter of the horrors of history that we see in the prologue. For further reading see Žižek (2005, p. 303). In the film, the authentic truth of history is the violence and devastation of the recent Spanish past, which resists symbolisation in its absence in the prologue.

⁶³ See Steinberg (2006).

governance in comparison with the early years of the dictatorship. At the same time, however, UN membership implied a tacit approval of the regime, enabling it to continue for longer. Nonetheless, moves were being made towards more open and democratic political structures and these were made in tandem with a shift in attitudes towards women, reproduction, the family unit, and children: 'the expectations of the population, which demanded a greater supply of social services such as education and health, rose' (Aceña and Ruiz 2007, p. 45). It is crucial to note, however, that this economic growth did not equate to political freedom:

This remarkable transformation in the standard of living occurred within a non-democratic framework in which political freedom and democratic trade union rights were denied, two features that overshadow the economic conquests of these years. (Aceña and Ruiz 2007, p. 45)

Hence, we could class this period as a technocracy or liberal dictatorship. As this new era of the dictatorship took hold, Spanish directors began to reflect cinematically on the recent past. Serrador's work on the child figure in both horror television and cinema seems to present a child that is very much present, rather than missing, and further to this, usually wielding power. Could it be that *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* was released at a moment when society began to look back at a period of time when children were overlooked and treated as a commodity? It is also pertinent to point out that kidnappings of children from left-wing families by the Spanish Catholic Church and the state are now known to have occurred up until the 1980s, meaning that they were still occurring at the time of the film's release.

Having summarised some significant socio-political changes of the period, I will move on to discuss the reality behind one of the major structures of the film's narrative, which is the chronicle of the holidaymakers and their getaway to Spain. As the plot follows the journey of two tourists arriving on the island where they will both later meet their deaths, the spectator first experiences the world through their eyes. To understand the relevance of this in the context of the timeframe in which the film was originally released, it will be useful here to review the tourism influx that the country experienced during the years of development in the 1960s. I have discussed the matter previously but nevertheless it is worthwhile to note how Spain rebranded itself with memorable travel campaigns including Manuel Fraga Iribarne's *España es diferente* and *Visit Spain!* The regime realised the potential for improving its most important industry that would come from rebranding its image. In 1951, Franco established the Ministry of Information and Tourism and elevated its work to a key facet of government. As previous chapters have summarised, this resulted in a tourism boom, in which the number of foreign visitors to Spain dramatically increased.

Significantly, the figure jumped 43% in 1960 to 4.3 million, 18 million in 1967 and 30 million by 1975 (Chislett 2014, unpaginated).

Thus, hordes of tourists packed onto buses and planes, opting for reasonably priced holidays on the Mediterranean coast and Serrador's film reflects this. Tom and Evelyn catch a bus into the centre of Benavís, which is bustling with tourists enjoying the festivities. Tom and Evelyn, in their apparent naivety, do not realise that they have arrived during festival season and therefore struggle to find somewhere to stay. This can be interpreted as a subtle nod towards how many foreign visitors to Spain during the 1960s and early 1970s might not have had extensive knowledge of Spanish cultural customs nor the true workings of the oppressive regime that was in power. In reality, whilst those in power were intent on presenting one image of Spain to the world, the lived experiences of those surviving under the regime were extremely different.⁶⁴ Part of the Ministry of Tourism's rebranding agenda utilized existing stereotypical tropes such as tapas and flamenco to sell Spain to the world. Perhaps most famously, we see this kind of clichéd symbolism parodied in Berlanga's *Bienvenido Mister Marshall* (Berlanga 1953), in which the town residents present their Spanish home as 'both folkloric and modern', when arguably it is 'neither' (Woods Peiro 2008, p. 9).⁶⁵ The *apertura* and the influx of tourists brought with them cultural changes and clashes between traditional conservative and more modern, liberal attitudes. An array of satirical comedic films from the 1960s and 70s played on this, including *Tres suecas para tres Rodríguez* (Lazaga 1975) and *40 Grados a La Sombra* (Mariano Ozores 1967), films which depict tourists as sunburnt, sandal-wearing *guiris*, or scantily clad bikini-wearing blonde women.



Figure 38 *Bienvenido Mister Marshall* (Berlanga 1953)

⁶⁴ Mass tourism and overtourism also led to an intensified period of gentrification and displacement of local people, something Ana Penyas presents in her graphic novel *Todo bajo el sol* (2021).

⁶⁵ It is important to acknowledge that such a reading might overdetermine the disjuncture between the image in the typical tourist brochure and the reality when seen through a political lens. Spain was, however, the lab for mass tourism and the regime was the driving force behind mass tourism with the goal of socioeconomic transformation.



Figure 39 *Tres suecas para tres rodríguez* (Lazaga 1975)

An awareness of these comedy films, which incorporate themes of the *apertura* and tourism influx is useful when returning to read *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?*. The structure of the tourist holiday film lulls the spectator into a false sense of security; and at first it might seem as if Serrador's film will be one of adventure and discovery, or incorporate comedic moments, as the holidaymakers adapt to Spanish cultural customs. I will explore this in due course. For now, it is important to note that Spain's tourism campaign resulted in a successful boost to the economy:

The so called “economic miracle” owed much to the explosion of tourism, which registered an increase of visitors from 6 million in 1960 to 30 million in 1975, leaving an estimated profit of \$3 billion for the economy. (Riquer i Permanyer, cited in Pérez 2007, p. 9)

Another significant aspect of the historical context is the fact that 1976 was an uncertain moment in Spain's political development. As with *Cría cuervos*, the socio-historical context of this film is a society in transition, with the filmic protagonists portraying intruders in a world experiencing an acceleration of urbanisation and industrialisation. The tourism boom of the 1960s demonstrates the balancing act of ideologies that the regime had to manage as it straddled the line between the authoritarian, conservative Catholic principles and liberal processes of modernisation during the *apertura*, as the country opened itself up to the world. This functions to create an almost schizophrenic backdrop worthy of the gripping horror narrative that will unfold. That said, and as Bernecker points out, it would be overly simplistic to posit that this change in the mentalities of many Spanish citizens occurred purely as a consequence of economic changes:

The fact that the status quo which had characterized their forebears was no longer passively accepted is already a clear sign that a big part of the Spanish population—measured in the millions—was submerged in this change of mentalities before the economic boom or parallel to it. (Bernecker 2007, p. 67)

With the benefit of hindsight—the film was released one year after the death of Franco—it is useful to consider the potential reading of the film as a critical reflection on the earlier years of the regime. This change in mentalities, occurring gradually during the latter years of the Franco regime, and later, happened in line with social and cultural advancements and meant that children also experienced significant waves of societal changes. Is this film a reaction to this change, and does it imagine extreme change, to the extent that the status quo is turned completely on its head? With *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* Serrador imagines a world in which the children overpower and ultimately murder their adult counterparts and parents, overturning one of the ten commandments: honour thy father and thy mother. The horrifying orphan child becomes the aggressor, and his upending of the adult/child hierarchy may be illustrative of a society undergoing profound change. In this same vein, Pramaggiore observes that

dictatorship and its complex aftermath, in addition to rapid secularization, declining birth-rates and increasing immigration, characterize the political economy of ... Spain ... and play a role in the discourse of children in horror. (Pramaggiore 2017)

In this light, *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* may be seen as a play on society's fears of retribution on the part of all from those who had been silenced for four decades, played out in the fictional form of child rebellion. Of course, the deployment of children in politically charged horror is not unique to Spanish cinema; we have seen the horrifying child in a plethora of films throughout the history of the horror genre. In the Spanish context, however, the eerie and sometimes monstrous child figure certainly does articulate societal fears around the social, political, cultural and economic changes taking place in the country, triggered by the end of the Franco regime. *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* makes clear reference to the horrors experienced by children due to the trauma of war. Having discussed the historical milieu, the following section of this chapter will recap the critical approach which underpins my reading.

Critical Approach

Before proceeding with the core analysis, I turn here to explain in detail the critical framework of the chapter. As I have outlined previously, my analysis develops in line with the plot of the film, and I deploy my key theoretical points and further develop them alongside close readings of specific features of the film. My reading draws from and builds upon a range of texts authored by Hispanists and Film Studies scholars in order to offer an original analytical approach which contributes to the emerging field of child-centred Spanish film studies. The chapter is divided into four main acts: 'The Prologue', 'Arriving in Almanzora', 'Child's Play and Epiphany', and 'Violent Climax'. In the first instance, I offer a summary of the film's director Narciso Ibáñez Serrador and

his career. I map this section of analysis onto the much remarked upon prologue of the film, considering what the prologue is meant to convey in light both of Serrador's career and of societal attitudes to the orphan child. Following this, I introduce the concept of flipped hierarchies and move to examine how the traditional status quo, in which the adults rule over children, is inverted in this cinematic work. Within this section, I discuss events that unfold in what I designate as the second and third acts of the film, as the adults move from the mainland to the island of Almanzora. It is during this sequence of events that the tourist couple realise that the children on this island do not behave in the ways to which they are accustomed, i.e. angelic and playful. Additionally, the analysis studies the agency of the child collective, examining how the children work together as a pack to gain control of the island and overthrow the adults.

The subsequent section of the chapter then applies the theory of the playspace (Randall 2017, p. 71), positing that we can examine specific instances and spaces of play to generate novel readings of the filmic children. Using the concept of playspace to read the third act of the film, in which the children are occupied in frequent ludic activities, I reflect on what we can learn from these instances of play, games and, often, proto-sadistic mischief. Simultaneously, I look at this act as the moment of epiphany in which the tourists begin to realise the horrific intentions of the children. Finally, this chapter addresses the depiction of the horrifying child orphan, incorporating elements of the filmic narrative that take place in the final act of the film in which graphic violence and murder are prominent. I carry out a close reading of key scenes in which I detect iterations of the uncanny child, the subversive gaze and murderous desire.

Additionally, the following key conceptual notions are woven into the analysis presented in this chapter. Firstly, the chapter considers the concept of orphanhood, reflecting on the kinless status of the children on the island. My investigation questions whether this presentation of kinlessness has a special resonance in the Spanish historical and societal context. Previous analyses of this film have looked at *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* as: an allegory of post-dictatorship and postnationality (Steinberg 2006, p. 24); an articulation of the mistakes during the transition to democracy (Evans and O'Neil 2013, p. 330); and explored the critical reception of the film (Lázaro-Reboll 2012a). My reading does not discount from these approaches, but rather adds to them. I endeavour to suggest new critical interpretations which we can glean from reading the children in the film by making orphanhood systemic to this analysis. Secondly, I examine to what extent we can theorise the children's harnessing of agency within the narrative of the film, referring to and supporting my analysis with theoretical notions drawn from the realms of sociology, Childhood

Studies and Children's Geography.⁶⁶ I draw on scholarship on the orphan child in the context of Spanish horror and on Rachel Randall's definition of the Foucauldian heterotopia as playspace (Randall 2015, p. 215). I look at theories of the adorable orphan (Harvey 2004, p. 63), I call on Lee Edelman's approach to normative futurity (2004, p. 17), and I apply Andrew Scahill's theories on the child collective (2011, unpaginated).

1. The Prologue

¿Quién puede matar a un niño? commences with eight minutes of black and white news footage which plays out the suffering and death of hundreds of thousands of children in violent conflicts across the globe. This documentary-style prequel to the film is what I have labelled as the first act, or prologue, of the film. Undoubtedly, this montage of footage is worthy of closer inspection. It will be helpful to preface the analysis of this section with the following key questions. What is the importance of this prologue in regard to the children we meet later in the film? Does this opening footage make a statement around the inclusion of the child which is markedly different to other depictions of the child in Serrador's oeuvre? And what can we understand about this initial presentation of orphanhood and how it corresponds with later depictions in the narrative?

As the opening credits of the film expand onto the screen, the soundtrack offers the soft giggles of a group of children. A child's voice begins to vocalise a haunting melody. The first image that the spectator sees is a black and white still of a young boy in a position of surrender (see Figure 40). The image fades into footage of the liberation of a Nazi concentration camp. The footage shows how children were severely physically abused and subjected to sick experiments. The caption on the screen reads: 'Segunda Guerra mundial. Aprox. 14 millones de niños muertos'. The clip ends with a return to the haunting melody of the singing child. The prologue in its entirety unfolds in a like manner, featuring violent conflicts including the Indo-Pakistani war, Vietnam, the Korean war, and Biafra. During all these events, children suffered, starved, were orphaned, injured and many died. Millions of children lost their lives and made-up huge percentages of total death tolls.

In this way, the director sets the scene and intimates the potential ideological thesis of the film for the spectator. I contend that through this prologue Serrador foregrounds the child's experience

⁶⁶ I also briefly reflect on this relationship of this 1976 film to films of the 2000s including *El espinazo del Diablo* (2001) and *El orfanato* (2007). I am thus able to consider how this film takes its place in the family tree of Spanish horror that has recurrently assimilated the child character. Although the iteration of the child character in these works of Spanish horror is different, it will be useful to note how the different inclusions possibly reflect the time period in which they are released.

of these historical events, whilst in the past the history books and scholars typically overlooked the child's account of living through major historical trauma. For example, Edward Packard asserts:

Official documents, produced by and for adults, also neglected children's lived experiences. Child survivors have also been overlooked by historians and, until recently, in the popular memory of the Holocaust. (Packard 2020, unpaginated)

Applying a similar critique to the Spanish context, Jorge Nisguritzer argues that in the study of the Spanish Civil War:

The focus is often on the deteriorating economic, political, and social development of Spanish society caused by this cruel fight. However, there is one unexplored factor that affected a specific part of the Spanish society; I am referring to the children who lived during the bloody Spanish Civil War. (2018, unpaginated)

Furthermore, in his study of children's drawings of the Spanish Civil War, Hodgson notes that 'the voices' of historical children are not fundamentally out of reach, but finding them can often be frustrating, challenging, and time-consuming' (2021, p. 146). I posit that *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* works to counteract this oversight in the history books and instead places the child's encounter of change centre stage. In doing so, the film makes the spectator aware of the need to revisit and rethink children's experiences of historical trauma. The editing of the prologue, carried out by Antonio Ramírez de Loaysa and Juan Serra, visually supports this contention, as each clip begins with a slow zoom-in on the face of a child, showing numerous black and white photographs capturing traumatic moments of conflict. The child's sweet yet eerie voice warbles and vocalises between each section.

Thus, the prologue sequence emphasises the enormous suffering experienced by children worldwide as a result of violent political clashes. Immediately following the prologue, the film viewer is presented with children playing on a beach, as the camera pans back to show the crowded coast, packed with holidaymakers relaxing and sunbathing. We can also read this as the director's problematisation of the government's preoccupation with this golden age of tourism, as the stark images of global suffering are immediately contrasted with hundreds of people sunning themselves on the Spanish coast. When a child witnesses a dead body washing up on the shore, the merrymaking of the sunseekers is dramatically disturbed. This contrast, between the footage of children dying around the world, and the child's encounter with the death of the adult, serves as a foreshadowing of the story that will subsequently unfold on screen. The transition between the prologue and this first scene on the beach also moves from child to child, calling attention to the central focus on children that will run through the entire narrative.

It is diverting our focus briefly here to note that we have seen the child figure previously in Serrador's televisual and cinematic works. One of the director's most famous endeavours is his work on the series *Historias para no dormir* (1966-1982) for Televisión Española. Consisting of three series and around thirty episodes, each story was an often unnerving and satirical macabre tale. The episodes would frequently be adaptations of dark tales from authors including Henry James and Edgar Allen Poe. Serrador would often introduce the episodes himself, sitting in an armchair and speaking directly to the viewer, in a clear reference to horror auteur Alfred Hitchcock.⁶⁷ The series has become something of a cult classic among fans of Spanish horror flicks. Interestingly, one of the episodes, *El muñeco*, features an uncanny child protagonist. The story we are told in the episode is centred on the mysterious child, Alicia, who has been possessed by the spirit of Elena, her first governess. This horrifying child lives a solitary existence in the attic of her father's gothic and dark house. In the culminating scenes of the episode, in which Alicia bites the head of a voodoo doll that represents her father, we see the child as one who has been dubbed 'a sweet demon' (Kincaid, quoted in Bohlmann and Moreland 2015). In destroying her father, Alicia in some ways 'ends the oppressive patriarchal order' (Yeo 2015, p. 96). This episode of *Historias para no dormir* could be seen as the beginning of Serrador's journey towards a narrative dominated by the uncanny child, who not only assumes centre stage but is also multiplied and reproduced.

Another of Serrador's works that plays with conventions surrounding the child is his first feature length film *La residencia* (1969). Also known as *The House that Screamed* or *The Boarding School*, *La residencia* tackles some violent murders of the pupils at a school for girls. Whilst the girls are not necessarily a band of killers in this film, the director plays on the tension-building dynamic of a strict school mistress and her shifty young son. Lázaro-Reboll has highlighted that *La residencia* brings to the screen a similar aesthetic to that of British Horror films of the early 1960s such as *The Innocents* (Jack Clayton 1961), based on Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw*, or *The Haunting* (Robert Wise 1963) (2012a). His episodes for *Historias para no dormir* and the director's first feature film *La residencia* were to lay the foundations for his later and most ambitious cinematic endeavour, *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?*, in which he would return to the horrifying child. Seemingly, then, the child is recurrent and can be singled out as important in the work of Serrador. In these previous works, however, the child does not seem to respond to specifically Spanish-themed trauma, nor does it speak to ideologies around the family, the child or Spanish citizenship in quite the same way that *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* does. In this child-centred work, it seems that Serrador has

⁶⁷ The director also appears in *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?*, where he plays a man getting on a bus who is asked a question about the festivities, i.e., referencing another facet of Hitchcock's oeuvre, the director's cameo appearance in his own films.

moved to query conventional understandings of orphanhood and childhood. Hence, we can propose fresh readings of this film and the child orphan in light of the rapidly changing Spanish socio-political stage at the time of the film's release.

Returning to the opening images of the film, we find that the news footage of the aforementioned global conflicts features a great number of children. Notably, in much of the footage, the children are shown as without a voice, with the adults taking control, moving them, inflicting abuse on them and holding them hostage. The children are visibly silenced and ordered around in these clips; their voices are unheard or ignored. Silence, in these instances, is exhibited here as limiting, stifling and powerless. Steinberg comments that the children of this film 'are the metonymic stand-ins for the transcendental character of youth's subordination to experience' (2006, p. 25) and the prologue would seem to attest to this reading. Figures 40 and 41 show examples of these kinds of images, the monochrome montage and slow zoom underscoring the distressing and serious nature of these visuals. The captions continue to roll across the screen, listing the children who lost their lives during these different wartimes. Notably, one conflict that is not featured in the newsreel prologue is the Spanish Civil War. The lack of inclusion of this relevant and local war is poignant; the editing of the clips sewn together in this way, with a conspicuous absence, has the effect of forcing the spectator to consider what has taken place on Spanish soil. What is common to all the clips, however, is the lack of voice and silencing of the children featured. The events in the narrative that follows function as a compensation for this absence of voice. Perhaps in a case of life imitating art, though, the prologue was omitted from some versions of the film: 'In some territories outside Spain the film was shorn of this sequence as distributors sought to create a film that was closer to 100 minutes in duration and thus easier to sell to theatres specialising in exploitation fare' (Willis 2017, p. 63)

By including this footage at the beginning of the narrative, Serrador incorporates a shrewd critique of political, violent clashes and their impacts on children the world over. Moreover, the silencing shown here is subsequently juxtaposed with a very different use of silence that the children of the island of Almanzora will display in the later acts of the film. The murderous children that the viewer will come to meet later in the plot employ silences to their advantage, creating a mostly noiseless form of communication for their collective. These silent exchanges will be dealt with later in this chapter.⁶⁸ My contention here is that the prologue serves as a reminder of the importance of paying attention to children's experience and of considering the ways they have been silenced in conflicts that have directly impacted them.

⁶⁸ The surrounding silence singles out and makes eerie otherwise innocuous sounds.



Figure 40 An image from the prologue of a child surrendering.



Figure 41 Children watch and wait in an image of the Korean war from the prologue

The image seen in Figure 41 is particularly striking in that all the children appear to be looking at the person behind the camera; a gaze reminiscent of the looks we see from the group of child killers we will find later in the narrative (see Figure 42). The images of children set up by the prologue will later be subverted by the filmic children, suggesting that they acquire forms of agency previously unattainable by the silenced children of global wars.



Figure 42 The children stand together as a group.

This section has demonstrated the relevance of the film's prologue in deciphering the core message of the film as it subsequently unfolds, and I have also discussed the depiction of the silencing of children during war-fuelled crises. Fundamentally, the prologue section of the film introduces orphaned children as critical protagonists. I now turn to study how the interior layout of the island serves as a chance for the children to subvert traditional familial power structures and seize control of their environment.

2. Arriving in Almanzora

In the present section of the analysis, I dissect the second act of the film, in which the honeymooning couple move from the mainland to the island of killer children. I posit that it is during these plot points that we find the setting up of the moment of epiphany, as the adults realise that the island is not operating according to the conventional way of life with which they are familiar. I progress my analysis in lockstep with the plot of the film, tying my close reading to key scenes in this plot segment.

It will be vital for my analysis here to consider how Serrador subverts the hierarchy of traditional adult-child relationships, leaving the children with power and ultimately an agency within the narrative. If the film is to be read as a comment on the suffering of children thanks to adult inflicted war and violence, Serrador plays on this by depicting the suffering of adults at the hands of children. In many horror films 'the idea of containment of the child often creates a feeling of discomfort due to the traditionally upheld belief that the child represents futurity and growth' (Pramaggiore 2017, unpaginated). In *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?*, however, this idea of containment is harnessed by the murderous children themselves, as they capture the adult couple. I will turn to analyse this in due course, though beforehand I consider the adults and their arrival on the island as tourists.

The fictional Spanish city of Benavis is bustling with people and festivities are taking place throughout the town. Director of Photography José Luis Alcaine, (who would go on to work on many of Almodóvar's films), uses backwards dolly shots which pull out and away from the protagonists to show Tom and Evelyn's exploration of the city, framing them in the centre of crowds, clutching the piece of paper with the address of their hostel and asking for directions, whilst also fighting through throngs of festivalgoers (see Figure 43). The location of this part of the shoot was in fact Ciruelos, Toledo, whilst other filming locations included Sitges, Menorca and Granada.⁶⁹ It seems that Serrador opted to portray a Spanish town of typical, white-walled houses and a blazing hot sun beating down on cobbled and dusty streets. This stylistic choice adds weight to the argument that Serrador is referencing the tourist boom given that this kind of image was used to sell Spain abroad. The setting also adds to the sense of claustrophobia in the island scenes; as spectators we are never shown a shot of the sea from inside the village street scenes. Evelyn and Tom stand out from the crowd; their enthusiastic smiles paired with their slightly sunburnt and sweaty complexions. Their confusion and lack of direction means the town becomes a sort of labyrinth, foreshadowing the underworld of horror which awaits them. They are made to seem naïve and blissfully unaware of the nightmare that will play out.⁷⁰

The cinematic painting of Tom and Evelyn initially portrays them as trusting, overly enthusiastic holidaymakers. Their otherness is further accentuated in Tom's attempts to communicate in short, simple Spanish phrases. The Spanish pejorative term for foreigners from the north is conjured here – *guiiri* – and this status of the visiting couple later functions to heighten the sense of confusion and terror when realisation sets in. Perhaps most importantly, this character design sets up the adult protagonists with a sense of playful, childlike curiosity. This lays the foundation for their later visit to Almanzora, where adults have little to no control. The orphan children possess the power; and it is the children who rule the village.

⁶⁹ Source: <<https://www.d cine.org/en-la-plaza-mayor-de-ciruelos-transcurre-una-de-las-escenas-mas-impactantes-de-la-pelicula>>

⁷⁰ It is worth pointing out that this element is slightly lost if we take into account the way that the actors originally spoke their lines in English and were dubbed into Spanish. This makes for odd and confusing viewing when they are supposed to be having communication difficulties. On the DVD releases, the best way to view this film is with the mixed audio track, which has the tourists speaking English and the islanders speaking Spanish, as originally recorded.



Figure 43 Evelyn and Tom consult the directions

When the couple arrive on the island, they first spend a great deal of time trying to locate other adults as they search for somewhere to stay. With most of the island eerily deserted and empty, Tom and Evelyn make multiple attempts to converse with some of the children they encounter. Despite this, their efforts are always met with silence or a long stare with a discernible lack of acknowledgement and approval. Sure enough, this leads to increasing frustration on the part of the couple as they struggle to make sense of the world in which they find themselves. In traditional Western nuclear family structures, we expect whispered conversations and wordless knowing glances to be exchanged between the adults of the family. On the island, this paradigm is reversed; silence from the children leaves the adults bewildered and angered. Silence, then, is used against the adult characters. In some interactions the spectator may interpret this as a language barrier. However, as the narrative proceeds, it becomes clear that the children will not even respond to Tom's basic Spanish.

The muted nature of the island's children is particularly apparent in one interaction between Evelyn and a young girl. Tom has left to explore the surroundings and Evelyn decides to shelter from the heat in an empty cafeteria. She is at first pleasantly surprised when a child enters. Evelyn tries to speak with her, asking her name, but the child does not respond. Confirming her name to be Lourdes, the girl then immediately kneels to touch Evelyn's stomach (see Figures 44 and 45). Making several circular stroking motions on her abdomen, the child seems to be entranced. Putting her ear to Evelyn's bump, she smiles. The camerawork also accentuates the importance of the seemingly psychic connection between the children, both alive and unborn, and the viewer is offered a close-up shot of Lourdes listening to the heartbeat of the child and looking off camera towards the left of the screen, as if she is contemplating a future that is not clear to Evelyn in the present moment. The child then stands and turns to leave the room. Evelyn starts after her, begging her to stay, but the girl leaves. Evelyn is momentarily bewildered by the occurrence,

eventually returning to contemplate her surroundings in the empty restaurant: a burnt chicken on the spit roast, still turning slowly as the metal structure squeaks. Again, the conventional power dynamics of adult-child relations to which the spectator may be used are overturned in this scene. The child gives Evelyn little information and defies her requests to stay by leaving her and heading off into the island. Importantly, the girl, Lourdes, only wanted connection with the child growing inside Evelyn, evident from her refusal to speak, her fascination with the foetus, and her pointed departure. Little by little, the pair begin to realise that the children are in control. This scene demonstrates the allegiance and collective force of the children on the island, an idea which I will explore in the analysis that follows.



Figure 44 Lourdes touches Evelyn's stomach.



Figure 45 Lourdes listens to the unborn child.



Figure 46 A child watches the adults run from the foreground

As the second and third acts of the film unfold, the adults begin to realise that the mysterious orphan children that they encounter are extremely powerful: not only are they independent from any parental authority but they seek to kill the adults who cross their paths. Whereas the trope of the orphan is often employed in fiction to offer a ready-made ‘problem’ for characters, for the children of *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?*, orphanhood is far from a problem and instead enables them to shift the power dynamic and reverse the traditional adult-child hierarchy. As Balanzategui puts it ‘the film overtly positions the children as a powerful monstrous force finally enacting their vengeance against an adult society that has violently oppressed them’ (2018 p. 110). Indeed, this reading is supported by the structure of the film. After the prologue, the main body of the film enacts a sort of vengeance on behalf of the children lost to war and tyranny.

Like the children from *Village of the Damned* (Carpenter 1995), the children of the Spanish island usually move as a group. Tom does have interactions with individual children occasionally. In one meeting he manages to wrestle a cane from a little girl as she is using it violently to bludgeon the face of an elderly man. In many scenes, Tom and Evelyn encounter the children from a distance: through a window, through the frame of a door, at the top of a sloped pathway. Tom often runs after them, but he can never quite reach them as they scurry off, ignoring his advances and questions. The adults are left floundering, not quite sure why the children will not respond to them.

The camerawork frequently frames this clashing of adults and children. Figure 46, for example, shows the legs of a child in the foreground as Tom and Evelyn hurry towards the horizon they move down the Z axis, the line of vision that runs from foreground to background. By positioning the child’s legs in the foreground, using a wide-angle lens and an infinite focus, where both near and far of the shot are in focus, the child seems giant whilst the adults recede into the background. This technique is used most famously in *Citizen Kane* (Welles 1941) when often the characters in power who decide the fates of others appear in the foreground of the shot. Thus, the depth of

focus and positioning executed in *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* functions to highlight this power dynamic.



Figure 47 Tom watches the children run out of the church.

Within the acts of the film which I have categorised as the *dénouement* (Tom and Evelyn's realisation of the reversed power dynamic of the island), we find various scenes of Tom discovering groups of children and their sadistic activities. Figure 47 shows the ending of one scene that takes place in an abandoned church. Tom enters upon hearing children's laughter, their high-pitched giggles bouncing off the walls and echoing through the darkened nave. Suspense builds as Tom walks slowly towards the altar whilst the laughter grows in volume. As Tom turns into the transept of the church, he finds a group of children playing dress-up in the blood-stained clothes of a murdered adult: the clothes they parade in are stained with blood. We find echoes here of the dress-up scenes in the films studied in previous chapters but with murderous undertones. When Tom approaches the children they shriek, laugh, and run past him out of the church. In this way the children evade the adult yet again, emphasised by the shot seen in Figure 47. Here the light and dark of the scene work as symbolism that simultaneously directs the eye of the spectator towards the group of youths. As the children run towards the light, framed by the door, and out into the stretches of the outside world of the island which they rule, Tom is left in the darkness of the old church. From this kind of directive and visual emphasis, the audience comprehends how the adult is left behind and isolated, literally and symbolically.

Thus, it is in this act of the film that the adults begin to realise that the children are in total control of the island. The elements I have analysed in this section demonstrate how the lighting, camerawork, and dialogue help to play out this journey of realisation. Furthermore, I suggest that the *mise-en-scène* is instrumental in conveying the structures of power present on the island and communicating the sense that the adults are prevented from accessing the children's spaces of

knowledge and power. In fact, these spaces, and how play becomes a fundamental part of them, will be explored in detail in the section that follows.

3. Child's Play and Epiphany

¿Quién puede matar a un niño? has been released under various English titles: *Island of the Damned*, *Trapped* and, perhaps most interestingly for my examination, *Death is Child's Play* (BBFC No date) as it picks up on the importance of play within the film. The relation between death and play will be examined in the current section and it is significant that Serrador's plot is also based on a book called *El juego de los niños/Child's Play* (Juan José Plans, 1976). The image of the child at play is one that is crucial to the plot and creation of suspense in the film. Notably, Sarah Wright has pointed out that the children's uncanny transgression relies on the initial establishment of pursuits which are generally related to childhood innocence (2013, p. 104).



Figure 48 A promotional poster for the English version of the film. <https://www.cinematerial.com/movies/quien-puede-matar-a-un-nino-i75462/p/xqwkkmyb>

In this section I offer an analysis of two key scenes which present the killer children of Serrador's film at play. The first scene I consider is the infamous game of piñata in which the children swing a sheath at the hanging body of an elderly man; the second corresponds to another prominent image from the film in which Tom stands facing the crowd of children. I have selected this scene for analysis more on account of what it represents, that is, the children's taking possession of the entire island as their playspace. In my breakdown of the narrative structure these scenes occur within the act of the film I have labelled as Child's Play. In this act we witness dark yet ludic stand-offs between the children and the adults. To reiterate, the theory of the playspace is one that Rachel Randall employs in her work on Latin American film. The theory holds that playspaces are akin to a kind of Foucauldian heterotopia, in that children can turn to and create spaces of play in which they assert forms of control (Randall 2017, p. 97). Randall states that playspaces allow children to 'escape social restrictions' and 'exercise what could be termed their

own ‘agency’” (2015, p. 215). Her argument will be useful to have in mind here as I consider novel readings of the instances of play present in *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?*

This piñata scene has come to be recognised as one of the film’s most powerful images as the children violently adapt the playful game in which partygoers hit a sweet-filled toy with sticks. Instead, the murderous children take turns to be blindfolded and swing a large sheath back and forth towards the body of an elderly man, hanging from the rafters above them. We are introduced to the scene through the gaze of the adult character. Tom, the holidaymaker and husband, stumbles upon the scene and peers through a crack in the door, his expression changing rapidly to a look of extreme fear as he realises what is happening.

This scene in fact replicates an earlier one. When the British couple arrive at the coastal town Benavís they walk through scenes of tourists and festivities in the streets. By chance, they encounter a group of young people celebrating the summer fiesta. They have formed a circle around a piñata filled with sweets. This constitutes a powerful foreshadowing of the ways that the murderous children of the island adapt these kinds of games for violent ends. If we compare, for example, the screen captures shown in Figures 49, 50 and 51 we can note how the game differs in its second iteration. Whereas in Figure 49 we look down on the scene, viewing the piñata and the players circled underneath it, in Figures 49 and 50 we are presented with both a view of the children and a POV shot of the corpse swinging above them. Looking into the children’s domain, the audience is also inserted within their game and thus can realise its importance in this violent world. We also see this scene, and in its resonance with the earlier shot of a piñata game on the mainland, as the correspondence between play and horror. As Lennard suggests:

Scholarship on children in the horror film has consistently overlooked those films in which children’s culture, rather than the child itself, is depicted as a monstrous force. Horror’s persistent representation of children with the means to resist adult power has made the iconography of childish fun ironically synonymous with adult fear. (Lennard 2012, p. 134)

Arguably, *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* makes use of this iconography of childish fun in the form of this game of piñata. As Lennard sets out, the inclusion of children’s culture, or rather, of their game, is used to depict a monstrous force. The children’s desire to break and retrieve the sweets from the first scene with the toy is displaced. In the second scene, the children instead seek to inflict pain and eventually kill the adult that hangs above them. In this way they succeed, in general terms, in subverting adult power. The colourful and playful innocence of their seemingly adorable clothing is presented in direct contrast with the battered and bloody face of the man that hangs above them. The gory make-up work by Fernando Florido accentuates this contrast.

Furthermore, the inclusion of the game captures the imaginary playspace of the children and its mystery for the adults, an effect underscored in the way that the children form a circle whilst Tom is on the outside, peering in. The murderous playspace is also emphasised by the double doors, which Tom must push open slightly in order to peer into the domain of the children (see Figure 52). Following the establishing shot, the spectator views a close-up of three children giggling as they hoist up the body of a man with rope. One of the children is blindfolded and proceeds to swing at the man with a sickle sword usually used for harvesting wheat. The children have transformed this game into a playspace to fulfil murderous desires.



Figure 49 A game of piñata in Benavis



Figure 50 Children play pinata with a dead man



Figure 51 A dead man hangs above the children.



Figure 52 Tom stares at the scene.

My analysis moves now to consider the way that the killer children succeed in taking control of the island, inflicting their reign of terror. I further examine the geographical space of the fictional island of Almanzora and the physical experience of children there and the ways they transform it into a playspace. As the camera follows Tom around the island in his attempts to make sense of the eerie silence that envelops the town, we are reminded of the game of hide-and-seek that children throughout history have enjoyed. This version, however, is far removed from the innocent running and hiding that are usually the extent of how the game is played. Tom quickly discovers the violent objectives of the children who, at first, scurry away from him. It is important to note, as we found in the analysis of *Cría cuervos*, that iterations of hide-and-seek have often been a trope in horror movies based on the child, functioning as a mischievous and cryptic chase from which the adults are excluded; a kind of Freudian fort/da, as we saw in Chapter Two in the hide-and-seek game depicted in *Cría cuervos*.

The island becomes a sadistic playspace where Tom and Evelyn will eventually meet their violent ends. The framing structure of the film is the couple's journey from the mainland of Benavís to the island of Almanzora. Rather aptly, Tom desires to take Evelyn there as he has nostalgic memories from his childhood holidays on the island, and Evelyn is also expecting a child. Instead of reliving his childhood memories, Tom must navigate a very strange place. The island he once knew has been transformed into a children's playspace in which the conventions of hierarchical Western society—where adults usually hold positions of authority and power— is subverted through the actions of a group of uncanny, violent children. The island can therefore be categorised as a heterotopia in line with Foucault's definition of such a place:

There are also, probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places— places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society— which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. (Foucault 1986, p. 24)

Effectively, the children manage to transform the island into a counter-site; it becomes their utopia but an adult's dystopia. According to Foucault, heterotopias do not have free and open access points and we see this in the way that Tom and Evelyn leave the mainland town, venturing across the water to the island where they find themselves on the edge of the heterotopic, eerie playspace of the band of youths. In Figures 53 and 54 we find shots that encapsulate the division and clash of the two groups and worlds. Tom (in Figure 53) and Tom and Evelyn (in Figure 54) stand facing the children with the camera behind them, the children stand en-masse in both shots. The wide-angle camera shots showing the gang of children reiterate their outnumbering of the adults and ownership of the island. The children stand close to the houses and infrastructure of the island, emphasising their dominance and control.



Figure 53 Tom stands in front of the children.



Figure 54 Tom and Evelyn face the band of children.

As part of their conversion of the island into their playspace, the children redefine the act of killing as a playful pursuit:

The couple discover that the children have revolted and that they murdered the adults in the village the day before, during Carnivale—an act that they refer to as “the game”. (Schahill 2011, p. 4)

There are further reverberations of this game and children’s play in the film, especially in Tom’s journey of discovery on the island. Slowly but surely, the newlyweds stumble upon more scenes of morbid play. Weaving his way through the island Tom enters rooms to find children who giggle and scurry away, leaving him in the darkness as the previous section examined. In this way, the children entice Tom into a long game of chase. He must piece together what is happening and eventually realise that the children are turning against the adults. When the couple decide to make their escape, the children have already set their sights on stopping them.

The scenes shown in the images also illustrate the titular question posed by the film. The gun that hangs down to the right of Tom’s body in Figure 53 itself begs the question of whether he will be capable of killing a child, with the collective actions of the children leading to this chilling climax. Aptly, the film also emerged at a moment when Spain itself, like Tom, was at a political and cultural crossroads. As set out in the historical context section, Spain was a country on the brink of a transition to democracy, following the recent death of Franco. As Steinberg puts it, there was a ‘climate of political and social uncertainty’ (2006, p. 23). Certainly, 1976 was a year in which the entire country was looking forward to the unknown as a newly orphaned society. Along with the obvious moral and ethical questions that the film raises, it is crucial for the approach adopted in my reading that we consider the status of the children *as orphans*. We could even go as far as to state that they are orphans by choice, having done away with the adults of their world. The director has sketched out a cinematic world where to be a child orphan is the desirable state and a precondition for the established order to be overturned.

This further speaks to generations of children who were left as orphans and suffered under the war-induced criminal acts of adults; the newsreel of the prologue introduces this notion to the viewer. Serrador has stated in many interviews that in hindsight, in order to emphasise this idea, he would have included those images at the end of the film instead. This insight from the director corroborates my hypothesis that it is worth studying orphanhood in the film in close detail. In any case, the fictional children of *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* take back power by removing themselves from the adult-child dynamic. With respect to horror movies such as *The Sixth Sense* (Shyamalan 1999) and *El orfanato* (Bayona 2007), McCarthy has commented that child mediums, in the sense of intermediary actors:

[S]erve the vital function of bringing “others” in from the periphery, giving voices to the marginalized, the abused, and the forgotten who are often also children. These “othered” children facilitate the reintegration of the ghosts into the consciousness of the living. (2012, p. 2)

This observation also lends itself to *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* where the children’s otherness is complexified further in Serrador’s film by their elective orphanhood. The types of play and the transformation of the island into a heterotopic playspace aid the children in asserting their own voice and including the voice of forgotten others, including forgotten children.

4. Violent Climax

This section examines how the orphan children of Serrador’s final feature film subvert traditional notions of the innocence of the orphan child. Through close analysis, I consider their deviation from models of innocence that have traditionally been seen in fictional and filmic narratives. I examine how earlier scenes foreshadowed and set the stage for the reveal of the shocking objectives of the children which become apparent in the final act. In the present section, I query the extent to which their perverseness and murderous desires can be interpreted as aberrant, and consequently, agentic. In my dissection of the film’s structure into acts, the section of the film I consider now is the foreshadowing of and execution of the final act; the act I have labelled as the violent climax in which the horrifying orphans turn their violence towards the couple.

The filmic children in *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* move away from the concept of the ‘adorable orphan’ (Harvey 2004, p. 63) that we see employed in religiously oriented *españoladas* whilst simultaneously effecting a rejection of the voiceless child of the suffocating Francoist family model. Balanzategui underscores this aspect of the way in which children are represented by Serrador when she says:

The children are a monstrous subversion of the perfect orphan martyrs of the *cine con niño*: while the adult protagonists initially assume that the children on the island are innocent orphans, they come to learn that the children killed all the adults on the island out of an apparent impulse for revenge. (Balanzategui 2018, p. 110)

I would go further and argue that the orphan children in this horror film are othered. They appear at first as innocent and playful youths. Serrador steers away from any concentrated use of special effects when creating these diminutive monsters. Thus, the children on the island represent a kind of ‘otherness’, in their murderous desire, but also through their state of orphanhood – they have made themselves orphans by killing their parents and previous generations (we find one scene in which a man who we can assume to be an elderly relative is attacked by a child with a stick). In this film, the status of orphan brings a kind of otherness that the children fully inhabit and functions as a way for them to harness autonomy. Where we see ghoulish and grotesque little monsters in later Spanish horror films including *El orfanato* (Bayona 2007) and *El espinazo del diablo* (del Toro 2001), Serrador instead creates terror in the real children who are, at first glance, ‘normal’.

For example, when Tom and Evelyn arrive on the island, they encounter a group of children fishing and playing in the water. Tom crouches down and taps the shoulder of a young boy who is fishing off the jetty. He attempts to make conversation and moves to look inside the boy’s basket; however, the boy catches his hand and slams the basket shut. The child meets Tom’s gaze with a look of contempt (see Figure 55). From the outset, then, the children that Tom and Evelyn meet are puzzling, eerie and do not fit neatly into their expectations of how children, and other docile natives, should behave. This behaviour, startling, from the adult perspective, is emphasised by the soundtrack: the building crescendo of the cello and double bass strings finishes with a stab as the boy slams his hand onto the basket. The music, composed by Waldo de los Ríos, is discordant, with no fixed key. This technique is often used to unsettle the viewer, and here it underscores the ‘strangeness’ and disturbing desires of the children. As Tom and Evelyn depart from the harbour, the divide between adults and children is visually apparent, and we will later see this enhanced in the standoff between the couple and the entire gang of youths.



Figure 55 The boy stares at Tom with a look of disdain.

Of course, the eerie child frequently appears in narratives as one that has been traumatised, or not steered in the “correct” direction of growth and thus causes problems, terror and distress for the adults in a given narrative.⁷¹ In *Los otros* (Amenábar 2001), for example, the children are discovered to have been spectres all along; in *El orfanato* (Bayona 2007), the ghostly, monstrous orphans entice frantic mother Laura (Belén Rueda) into their jurisdiction of the afterlife in the search for her lost child. Finally, *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* (Ibáñez Serrador 1976) is the film in which hundreds of orphaned children stage an uprising, seeking revenge on the adult population and murdering them. In these depictions, which traverse the boundaries between Spain as a fledgling and established democratic society, the orphan is aligned with a dangerous kind of child, outside the control of the normative familial structure. The children that take over the island in *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* do not appear to seek to grow upwards into adult selves. Adulthood is, instead, a state of being that they want to destroy. The children want to expand their collective and appear to recruit other children that they meet into their group through an intense gaze and touch (see Figure 56). It is through this kind of hypnotic enticement that they also manage to infect the unborn baby inside Evelyn, so much so that it eventually kills her from within. It is worth noting that this trait of the hypnotic glare is similar to that of the children in the 1960s British-American film *Village of the Damned* (Rilla 1960) (the remake of which was referred to above), in which the children of an entire village become possessed and powerful, usually walking as a group and wreaking havoc in the local area. In fact, some of the images on the DVD of the Eureka Entertainment version of *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* released in 2011 feature children with enlarged, bright white, hypnotic eyes, an image we also recognise from the posters and DVD covers for *Village of the Damned* (see Figures 57 and 58).

⁷¹ Kathryn Bond Stockton uses the term ‘correct growth’ in *The Queer Child, or Growing Sideways in the Twentieth Century* (2009) to describe heteronormative, conventional development from childhood to heterosexual adulthood.



Figure 56 The children communicate with a look.

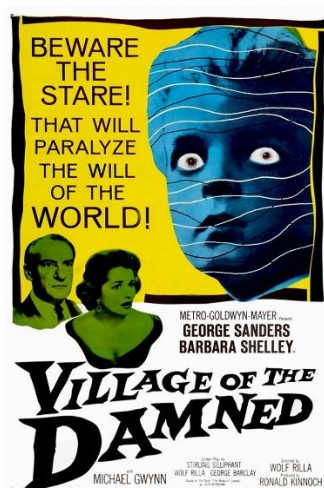


Figure 57 *Village of the Damned* (Rilla 1960) poster.

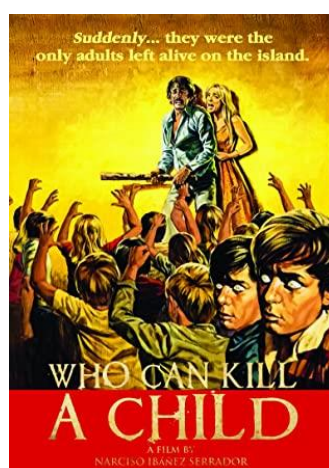


Figure 58 *Who can kill a child?* Poster.

Indeed, the gaze of the killer children of this film becomes a powerful resource. Many scenes in which the spectator is presented with the orphan child are sparse in terms of dialogue. Instead,

the gang of youths communicate frequently with looks, touch and actions. As such, these instances of non-verbal communication mean that they can make their world impenetrable from the adult perspective. Scenes which depict this language of looks are powerful in that they convey subversive attitudes towards adult-centric authority even through scenes with no dialogue from the children. In one such occurrence of this, during their attempts to escape, Tom and Evelyn manage to commandeer an abandoned car and drive it down towards a cove on the shoreline. There, they find a fisherman's coastal cottage with children playing in the water who have not yet been recruited by the collective on the island. However, the couple have been pursued by the children from the town centre, who scramble down to the shore and approach the group of youths at play in the water. The shot in Figure 59 exemplifies the collective agency and hive mind of the children. The blonde-haired boy in the foreground of the shot commences a long, hard stare, making eye contact with a young girl, who rapidly becomes entranced, her facial expression transforming from a beaming smile to a frown of pain and aversion. The background of the shot is out of focus, but the viewer can see other children approaching, who quickly become motionless, caught in a stare down (see Figure 59). The camerawork here draws attention to the group and their way of working together to create collective agency, further showing the adults as vastly outnumbered by the children, who are intent on recruiting more children to join their 'game'. In this manner, the children's game shifts from inaccessible and secretive, to overpowering; this form of communication is impenetrable from the adult perspective and equips the children with an unnerving power.



Figure 59 The children communicate through a look

In theory, the trope of the innocent, adorable child would usually be intensified by the concept of orphanhood. As Jessamy Harvey explains, orphan children in Spanish fictional and cinematic narratives have frequently been employed as 'religious martyrs' and that orphans represent those who are excluded from the social structure of the family. She goes on to state the following:

Given that children are a complex site in culture, in that they are the privileged locus for the transmission of culture as well as the 'uncivilized' Others in need of adequate socialization, the correct 'parenting' of orphaned children becomes an issue fraught with anxiety. (2004, p. 64)

The fear factor and power of these child orphans then, is that they have rejected any apparent need to form part of the social structure of the family and avoid attempts made by adults to establish parental authority over them. Undoubtedly, this rejection also occurs on screen in the scene which takes place on the seashore. Also, during this final act of the film, we see the children reject the parental orders from a motherly figure who resides in a house by the seashore. Although she calls for the children to come to her and re-enter the family home, the children refuse. This rejection is emphasised by the shot in Figure 60, where the six children shown in the centre surround the boat. Despite the beckoning calls from the parental figure shown in the foreground of the shot, the children stand motionless, meeting her gaze yet ignoring her calls. Again, the children here do not possess a desire for familial closeness and display what Scahill labels a 'pack-like mentality' (2011, para. 11).



Figure 60 The children outnumber and ignore the adult

Serrador experiments cinematically with the idea of the missing adult, as the protagonist couple slowly begin to realise that there are no adults on the island. The seemingly kinless children act as a collective to overthrow the adult population of the island. In doing so, they subvert the trope of the innocent and angelic child. Serrador himself discusses this idea with Mark Gatiss in the documentary programme *Horror Europa with Mark Gatiss*:

NIS: If something innocent can be a monster, that has more impact.

MG: Do you think that despite their superficial innocence children do have a great capacity for violence?

NIS: Yes, of course

MG: This was a decade when hits like *The Exorcist* and *The Omen* made monstrous children the height of horror fashion. Here, however, they are more a force of nature. Like Hitchcock's *Birds*, they're mostly content to watch, malevolent in their silence, and wait. Wait to take their revenge on the adult world. (cited in Das 2012)

The film has indeed been read as a story of children poised to seek vengeance on adults for their crimes against children, but how does the idea of the orphan child add to the film's fear factor, considering the Spanish context specifically? Following decades of a dictatorship in which children were an intrinsic part of the nuclear family, as conceived by the state and by the Catholic church, and key to rebuilding the population after the losses of the Civil War, much of Francoist cinema emphasised the importance of the child in the family unit. *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* turns this dynamic upside down by presenting an island of kinless children who, rather than depend on the adult and the family unit, seek to destroy their elders. McCarthy notes that 'the evil child in horror film draws upon cultural anxieties in the 1960s and 1970s about loss of parental control...and the threat to traditional notions of family and gender roles' (cited in Olson and Scahill 2012, p. 2)

Along with the more general cultural anxieties mentioned here by McCarthy, we could also mention the anxieties stemming from Spain's release from four decades of paternalistic dictatorship. Thus, Serrador perhaps ratchets up a notch the horror of unsupervised children by including an evil brood who strive for full control. Instead of being presented solely as a threat to the conventional nuclear family so intrinsic to Francoist ideology, they are also a product of years of such oppression. This is also why it is important to take into account their status as orphans. This idea of Spanish visual culture's depiction of monstrous or ghostly orphan children as being rooted in the political has been explored by Luz C. Souto, specifically in her essay "España una, grande y huérfana" (Souto 2014). Her essay explores how contemporary ghostly and monstrous orphans of Spanish horror can be traced back to gothic Spanish culture of the Golden Age, such as in the play *La vida es sueño* (Calderón de la Barca 1635), but, principally, she considers the political context in which the meaning of childhood and orphanhood sits. She analyses, for example, the orphans of *El espinazo del diablo* (del Toro 2001), noting how they point to the monstrous being what is different, and how those who inherited a non-Francoist ideology during the regime were themselves considered monsters. If we apply a similar reading to *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?*, we could then argue that the revolt of the child orphans and their monstrous rampage is indicative of children's desire to resist the stifling confinement of Francoism. Perhaps just as horrifying, then, is the realisation that many children underwent varying forms of repression for decades, and as Souto points out, were likely to have been subjected to medical intervention and experimentation meant to substantiate a political ideology:

Las experimentaciones con humanos para mejorar la raza aria durante el Tercer Reich o para demostrar la inferioridad mental de los republicanos durante el franquismo perviven en la memoria colectiva como acciones monstruosas que producen monstruos. (Souto 2014, p. 9)

In *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* we could state that a collective of child monsters is produced by the monstrous actions of adults the world over. The story that plays out directly after the documentary style scenes from the prologue can be read as the imaginative agency and monstrous acts to which mistreated children might be driven in order to take control of their own lives. Forms of torture are instead directed to the adults at the hands of the children. More unsettling still are the locations of the children's attacks. Often, these scenes of violence against adults take place in the home, the church, and walking routes through the *pueblo*. One young girl even approaches her own father, leading him out of his own home and to his death, after feigning an innocent cry for help (see Figure 61). Thus, the horrifying nature of these orphans can be detected in their subversive acts and reappropriation of childish behaviour.



Figure 61 A young girl begs her father to accompany her.

In this final section of analysis, I turn to explore the scene in which the adults find themselves imprisoned. After failing to shake off the band of children who have tailed them throughout their efforts to escape from the island, Tom and Evelyn barricade themselves inside the abandoned police station. The children frantically attempt to access the cell in which the couple have taken refuge. One of them manages to obtain a handgun and climbs up to the tiny window. Aiming his gun through its bars, the child meets Evelyn's panic-stricken gaze with a smile that represents the pleasure that children derive from their violent efforts (see Figure 62). We are reminded of the images we have seen in previous films (*Cría cuervos*, *Tómbola*) where the murder weapon is juxtaposed with the wide-eyed, adorable stare of the young child. To save Evelyn, Tom is forced to shoot and kill the child (see Figure 63). Tom and Evelyn then wrestle with the moral dilemma

in which they have found themselves. 'A normal child is incapable of killing a man', remarks Evelyn, to which Tom responds, 'but I am a normal man, and I killed a child'.

Following this, the dead child slumps down into the windowsill, his small hands still slumped around the gun as it falls to the ground whilst a headwound slowly leaks blood down the white wall (see Figure 63). The viewer is reminded of the film's prologue which featured numerous images of children dying as a result of adult violence. By depicting both the murder attempt by the child and dramatic death of the child at the hands of the adults on screen, Serrador again separates the children from tired notions of virtuousness and heteronormative familial futurity. The shot-reverse-shot heightens this dynamic, as the shot changes to show the couple, parents themselves, looking on in shock at the sight of the dead child.

This scene, then, recalls the opening prologue sequence of the film, demonstrating how the environments of war and violence ruthlessly and continually impact the lives of children. Conventional ethical and moral standpoints are distorted. In this scene, and throughout the film, it would seem as if the children's uprising is an act of revenge and a desire to take back control after oppression, such as that faced by children during the Spanish Civil War in which children are caught in the crossfire. For the majority of the plot of Serrador's film, it is the children who are in control and the unthinkable taboo of harming or killing a child is something the killer children use to their advantage.



Figure 62 The child aims the gun



Figure 63 The child is killed



Figure 64 Evelyn and Tom look on in shock at the child

The adults are left to look on at the violence to which they have been driven and they are forced to wrestle with their actions. The group of children put down their weapons and leave the police station en masse, whilst Tom and Evelyn remain holed up inside the building. The terrifying game continues. Although the couple are momentarily safe from the reaches of the hive mind of the children, sanctuary does not last for long, and Evelyn is eventually murdered by her unborn child from within. The gang of murderous youths manage to infiltrate every physical and symbolic adult space. Furthermore, the actions of the child collective call into question widely upheld beliefs about the family, childhood innocence, and normative futurity (Edelman 2004, p. 4). Scahill has defined the children of *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* as a ‘revolting child collective’ (2011, unpaginated), and I would expand on this by labelling these children not only as a revolting but also as an agentic collective.

Conclusions

When Evelyn eventually dies at the hands of her unborn child, Tom is forced to venture out into the island alone where he is met by a wall of children; he opens fire and guns down a number of young people. But despite attempting to make his escape he fails to leave the island and whilst

battling children, is shot down by the armed guards who have come to investigate *Almanzora*. After the children also succeed in murdering the officers who have set foot into their murderous playspace, they set sail on boats headed for the mainland ‘¿Crees que los chicos de allí se pondrán a jugar como nosotros?’ (Do you think the children there will play like we do?) wonders one of the children. ‘Si, claro, en todo el mundo somos muchos chicos, muchos’ (Yes, of course, all over the world there are many, many children’ replies another. Strikingly, this is the longest section of spoken dialogue between the children in the entirety of the film. It is here that the credits roll, as a group of children cast off for the mainland, looking to continue their games and recruit more members. With figures of authority and adults out of the picture, the final images of the film are of the children waving off the group as they sail away.

This chapter has explored the orphan children who protagonize the Spanish horror film *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* and began by setting out the historical context surrounding the film’s release. I have demonstrated that it is important to understand the key historical moments of the period in order to reflect on the narrative’s representation of orphan children. My examination then went on to suggest that the prologue of the film presents examples of conflicts and historical events from across the globe in which children’s voices have been silenced. I argue that Serrador includes this prologue in order to contrast this later with the body of the film in which children have a powerful voice and, in fact, use silence to their advantage. Following this, the chapter moved to expose the alternative hierarchy detectable in the film, where children take charge and adults must take a back seat. I then suggested that we can read the children’s taking of the island as the creation of a playspace. Finally, the chapter investigated the cinematic presentation of the children as horrifying orphans. My analysis focused on how the murderous orphan children deviate from the notion of the ‘adorable orphan’ and subvert traditional notions of childhood innocence by demonstrating violent desires.

The agency of the child orphans in this film is created in the form of a collective, or, as Schahill puts it, ‘young bodies en masse, in unison, working in concert but discordant with parental society’ (2011, p. 1). The children find power in play as a transformative act. Their brutal reappropriation of traditional children’s games and ludic activities means that they overpower the adults on the island. The youths further succeed in turning traditional hierarchies of power upside down. Where conventional familial structures in which parental authority and adult forces dictate the lives of children, Serrador’s children celebrate the absence and elimination of adult power. This is a unique rendering of orphanhood in that not only do the children reject adult influence, but they also create a masse gang that seeks to do-away with the traditional nuclear family. Perhaps this is where the true horror of this story is found. Serrador offers up this tale to the world at a moment when

Spanish society found itself in a moment of uncertainty, and on the brink of political, social, and cultural change of a huge magnitude.

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that the orphan children of *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* employ a range of strategies in order to assert various forms of agency. The analysis and close reading of the film illustrates the ways the children harness agency by overcoming their adult counterparts. However, it also highlights the danger in the repression of children and the oversight of their experiences in historical accounts. My investigation has revealed the value in acknowledging how Serrador's children employ tactics of opposition to resist adult control. Additionally, and significantly, this reading contends that playing practices and murderous desires which the children possess equate to a unique rendering of agentive orphanhood and childhood. The analysis of this chapter also represents a deviation from the main currents of analysis in the previous literature on the film, in that here we have explored the agency of the orphan child collective, considering an alternative unit which the children have selected, rejecting nuclear family structures and largely heteronormative concepts of futurity. The final case study chapter which follows will consider the depiction of orphanhood and children's agency in the Catalan film *Estiu 1993* (Carla Simón 2017).

Chapter Four: The Power of Play and the Orphan in Contemporary Spanish Cinema: *Estiu 1993* (Simón, 2017)

Estiu 1993, or *Summer 1993*, was released in 2017 and is director Carla Simón's first feature length film. The film is set largely in the luscious Catalan countryside, with scenes unfolding in locations including Parc Natural de la Zona Volcànica de la Garrotxa and the director's home village of Les Planes d'Hostoles. The film was extremely successful on the festival circuit. With nominations in fourteen categories and awards in five in the 2018 Gaudí awards of the Catalan Film Academy, including Best Script and Best Direction, it has been cited as a key film for a new moment in Catalan Cinema by Isona Passola, the president of the Academy. Director Simón paints a beautiful picture of childhood, mourning and play. She would work closely with the young child protagonists in scenes that combine loose scripts, improvisation, and spontaneous playful flourishes from the child actors.

The film is relatively underexplored in research literature. This chapter endeavours to fill this gap, investigating *Estiu 1993* as a recent example of Spanish film that centres on the child's perspective. Further to this, the film deals with the historical context of children who were left orphaned as a result of the HIV/AIDS epidemic that hit Spain particularly hard. According to a report published in 2003, worldwide, 'los niños y niñas que han quedado huérfanos a causa del VIH/SIDA representan la mayoría de los huérfanos menores de 15 años' (Plataforma SIDA en África 2003, p. 19). In a review of the film, the *New York Times* noted how the film 'evokes Frida's emotional fragility' (Catsoulis 2018) which I agree can indeed be noted in scenes in which Frida navigates the illness and consequent deaths of her parents. Alongside this, however, we witness the development of a nascent resilience and agency throughout the course of the film. Frida is emphatically more than a symbolic vessel that is instrumentalised to articulate socio-political change cinematically, as I will attempt to demonstrate in this chapter.

Simón's film takes its place next to the prominent child-centred Spanish films that I have discussed in this thesis. This chapter will therefore also draw out some of the similarities between her film and the content of *Cría cuervos* (Saura 1976), the film discussed in Chapter Four. I offer a reading of *Estiu 1993* that again employs theories from Childhood Studies to examine the orphan child figure. Through such an application, we can detect how this cinematic child transgresses limited renderings of the orphan as a passive cypher of victimhood. I will also map the film analysis onto the wider socio-historical shifts in Spanish society in order to explore the cultural politics and understanding of the family and the child orphan. *Estiu 1993* is a melancholic, sentimental

depiction of the child's journey of loss, displacement and discovery. It is a film that warrants scholarly exploration as a case study chapter in this thesis due to the many agentive actions displayed by the young orphan protagonist Frida (Laia Artigas). This chapter will develop some of the initial scholarly groundwork necessary in order to approach the film academically. Where Raquel Loredó has observed how the film 'utiliza el punto de vista de Frida como lugar desde el que entender su miedo, desamparo, frustración' (uses Frida's point of view as a way to understand her fear, helplessness, frustration) (Loredó 2017, p. 156), Stuart Davis notes that Frida is often a static and passive observer in many scenes in the film (2020, p. 126). This chapter reflects on these interpretations and interrogates them, turning its focus to how the orphan child, in the film and in the contextual reality that sits behind the narrative, is able to cultivate strength and exert agency.

As outlined in the initial critical approach, my reading of the film is informed by interviews conducted with the director of photography Santiago Racaj and also outreach workers from non-profit, educational organisations that worked to educate and reduce stigma surround HIV/AIDS in 1990s Spain. The tools which Frida uses to work through the potentially overwhelming change that shrouds her world will be explored with the support of the theoretical notions that I will recap in due course. I will challenge:

[A]pproaches that tend to instrumentalize the child figure as a sentimental conduit to the historical past, as well as readings that claim the child as an allegorical figure wrought out of the nation's contested and violent history. (Thomas 2019, p. 10)

Of course, the film responds to the aftereffects of political transition and cultural change that Spain would experience following the end of the dictatorship. For example, the ideological divide between Frida's conservative, Catholic grandparents and her seemingly liberal aunt and uncle comes to the fore in a scene that I will subsequently analyse. This is just one example which shows why it will be necessary to preface my analysis with a review of the historical and social background, which sets out some key contextual events at the time of film's setting.

Historical and Social Context

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Spain continued to play catch-up in its quest for modernization following the end of the Franco regime. In 1993 Felipe González, president of the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE), was elected for his fourth term as a Prime Minister of Spain. In the late 1980s, the PSOE had been pushing for a further Europeanization of Spain. The party sought fast track modernisation through European integration. Such a move was viewed as a way to increase international confidence and investment in Spain, and also as method of distancing Spain from its dictatorial past (Stapell 2010, pp. 150-151). In 1992, Barcelona played host to the

Olympic games, Madrid was selected as the 1992 Cultural Capital of Europe, and the Seville Expo took place to mark 500 years since the ‘discovery’ of the Americas. All of these events worked towards the international presentation of Spain as an open and European nation. Whilst these arguably performative and politicised cultural events enabled the Spanish government to show off a ‘new’ Spain to the world, Spanish society was navigating various social issues in the early 1990s. From the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, *La movida* became the backdrop for liberation and experimentation. Sexual liberation and drug abuse were a part of this, as progressive counterculture politics clashed with existing conservative values.

During the 1990s, Spain experienced some of the highest numbers of cases of HIV/AIDS in all of Europe. By 1997, Spain had 120,000 HIV/AIDS cases in an adult population of around 21 million—the highest rate in the European Union and triple the average for Western Europe (Alvarez-Dardet and Hernandez Aguado 1994, p. 331). The influx in confirmed cases of the virus in the 1990s has been linked to an increased usage of intravenous drugs as *La movida* swept through the country and some Spaniards experimented with narcotics.⁷² According to Rinken and Vallecillos:

Reports about dramatically high HIV prevalence rates among Spanish drug users had already emerged by 1986-1987. However, the Spanish government began to devise large-scale harm reduction programmes for drug users only in the years 1992-1994. (Rinken and Romero, 2002).

Scholars critiqued the Spanish administration for its perceived inadequacies in dealing with this rise in detected cases. Alvarez-Dardet and Hernández Aguado’s 1994 analysis emphasises this failing:

There are AIDS policies on AZT treatment or isolation of patients in almost every Spanish hospital, but no risk reduction schemes or outreach worker services at the community level (1994, p. 332).

This kind of approach has arguably given way to a consequent spread of confusion and lack of strategy around the virus, even in contemporary Spanish society. Education and prevention programmes were developed, with groups even giving out free condoms outside the Prado in Madrid (The New York Times 1997). Lacking, however, were investment and resources to fund prevention and education. According to a recent report, failings in awareness and prevention remain even in present-day society:

⁷² *La movida* is the name given to the cultural explosion that took place in Spain following the death of the dictator. Many Spaniards revelled in the newfound liberation and counterculture.

Limited commitment at national level is hampering efforts to educate high risk populations and reduce stigma. The lack of policy on sexual health education in schools is a key barrier to improving risk awareness among young people. There is a general lack of focus on prevention, which is often not considered a priority and has no comprehensive, national level framework in place to unite efforts. (KMPG 2019, p. 5)

The plot of *Estiu 1993* speaks to tensions contemporaneous with the time in which the film is set, surrounding the rise in cases of the HIV/AIDS virus in Spain. This epidemic dramatically impacted the life of Carla Simón, the Catalan-born director of the film. She lost her mother to the virus in the summer of 1993. The film presents these events of loss, transition, and identity through the scenes of Frida (Laia Artigas) at play with her cousin, Anna, who becomes her adopted sister. Frida moves from urban Barcelona to the countryside of Girona, after losing her mother to the HIV/AIDS virus. Since 2013, sexual health education has not been mandated in the Spanish school curriculum. Stigma has also been outlined as a key issue in Spain, meaning that barriers include reluctance to be tested and misunderstanding.⁷³

These kinds of shortcomings in policy have had a knock-on effect on the adoption rates of Spanish AIDS orphans, with children with the virus in Spanish orphanages being classed as ‘menores con necesidades especiales’ (Vera 2016, unpaginated). Susana Morales, president of *La Asociación Familia de Colores*, lamented the rejection of these children by potential adoptive parents (Vera 2016). In *Estiu 1993*, we see protagonist Frida’s own experience of the virus, with her intermittent visits to the doctor often framed by scenes of play before and after. This unique presentation of her experience of the virus again accentuates Frida’s subjectivity that Simón centralises. *Estiu 1993* is also unique in its portrayal of the child’s first-hand perspective on the experience of the AIDS virus and the further lack of information surrounding the virus in Spanish society of the time. In paediatric scholarship, Shetty and Powell highlight the following:

Stigma and discrimination that often surround people affected by HIV/AIDS further compound the emotional distress and social isolation experienced by these children. The children often face prejudice and neglect at the hands of their caregivers or communities, or they are rejected by their communities because of fears that they also have the virus. (Shetty and Powell 2003, p. 27)

Frida’s story opens a necessary dialogue about the treatment of AIDS orphans in contemporary Spanish society, from the outlook of a child. Before proceeding to examine the film in more detail, I will now turn to review this chapter’s critical approach.

⁷³ A niche practice named ‘Bugchasing’ has also developed, in which people actively seek to contract the virus. See: <<https://www.elmundo.es/f5/comparte/2017/10/20/59b94783e5fdeae5238b4608.html>> and <<https://www.elperiodico.com/es/sanidad/20160418/clinic-grupos-ruleta-sexual-sida-5065168>>

Critical Approach

In the present section, I review the theoretical concepts that are central to my reading of the orphan child protagonist. I posit that we can re-read the child orphan character Frida by applying some of the theories outlined in this section. Furthermore, I offer a background on the interviews conducted in the fieldwork, which inform my analysis in the chapter.

Moving through the film in chronological order, my examination works through what I have defined as the four main acts of the film. Each section conducts a close reading of several scenes, with the objective of unpacking the protagonist Frida's relationship with agency throughout the narrative. The first act is concerned with the opening and establishing scenes of the film, which document Frida's move from Barcelona to the countryside. I focus on how orphanhood is represented cinematically. Following this, the analysis is directed towards the second act of the film, concentrating on the new spaces of play that Frida finds in her new home and her relationship with her cousin Anna. Within this area, I focus on the space of play as a heterotopia (Randall 2017, p. 74), applying concepts from the field of Children's Geography. The third section considers the third act of the film in which I proceed to analyse the concept of the Spanish family as presented in the film. I examine Frida's experiences of transition, coupled with the cinematic presentation of archetypal families. This will allow me to reflect on the presence of the orphan child in the film and what this can tell us about politics and ideology around the child and the family that have persisted across otherwise radical political shifts and transitions in the Spanish context. Finally, I examine the fourth act of the film which focuses on Frida's spiritual connection with her mother after her death. I look at this element of the film through the paradigm of Magical Thinking. Through Frida's recourse to the realm of her imagination, not only is the spectator offered an insight on her perspective, but we also observe her progressive acquisition of agency.

The chapter also draws on data collected from semi-structured interviews which I conducted during my fieldwork. I adopted this approach in order to focus on specific elements that I knew I wanted to consider in my analysis. The interviews carried out were face-to-face group and individual interviews. Thanks to the personal experiences and recounting of processes afforded by my interview with creative practitioner Racaj, I am able to offer an analysis of the camerawork and lighting. The analysis works to support the contention of my reading that the film underscores Frida's perspective and budding agency. In turn, I study the editing work of Ana Pfaff, along with how diegetic sound is employed to foreground the sensorial experience of the orphan child.

Additionally, I conducted a group interview with outreach workers from SIDA STUDI and Creación Positiva in Barcelona. Staff from both organisations spoke with me about their

experiences undertaking sexual health educational outreach work and support services for people living with HIV/AIDS. I considered it fundamental to situate my reading of the child orphaned by AIDS and her fictional navigation on-screen with the actual experiences of families that underwent the trauma. Creación Positiva is a feminist social welfare organisation that works to promote sexual health and sexual rights in Barcelona, Spain.⁷⁴ They offer activities including workshops, information sessions, political lobbying, training courses, individual and group counselling, among other services. One of their areas of work is education around the HIV/AIDS epidemic. SIDA STUDI is a similar non-profit welfare entity that works primarily on education and promotion of sexual health in the area of HIV/AIDS and on raising awareness.⁷⁵ The outreach workers run educational courses and training workshops, sex education classes for children, and offer free contraceptive items and information. They have a library with thousands of resources including books, leaflets and film dossiers on the HIV/AIDS virus. Both organisations worked closely with people with AIDS during the 1980s, 90s and beyond. The work that they do today continues to fight the stigma and prejudice that remains in present-day Spanish society. As a result, I buttress my analysis of key scenes with insights from the outreach workers who dealt with similar situations that arise in the film's narrative in their daily work. I selected these organisations as they are based in the location of the film's setting of Catalonia, and I gained an insight into how the crisis was experienced on the ground in the region.

1. Moving House

Estiu 1993 centres on Frida's status as an orphan child. Whilst the film avoids making the cause of the death of her parents explicit, her orphanhood is accentuated by the way that the motif of death and loss becomes a silent character within the narrative. This section will unpack the ways that the narrative and camerawork make apparent the status of the child as orphan. As I have set out, the film is important as it makes known the story of many children who shared Frida's experience. Pullen has explored the prominence of orphans in bringing the personal stories and experiences to the fore in popular culture:

Orphans are becoming recognized as useful, and prophetic, storytellers of AIDS narratives. The (HIV-negative) orphan of a family with AIDS offers hope of a modified future, presenting insight and a coming to terms that suggests psychological progress. At the same time the (HIV-positive) orphan with AIDS, through performative bodily presence, offers an image rejecting victim status, scope for education, and powerful agency to help prevent the progress of HIV.

⁷⁴ Creación Positiva is an organisation based in Barcelona, Spain. See <<https://www.creacionpositiva.org/>>

⁷⁵ SIDA STUDI is also located in Barcelona, Spain. See <<http://www.sidastudi.org/>>

AIDS orphans (both HIV-negative and -positive) offer distinct and emotional voices. (Pullen 2008, p. 664)

In a similar vein, Frida's story brings director Simón's personal story to the screen in an accessible way that leaves room for present-day reflection on Spain's AIDS crisis. The opening scenes emphasise her transition to a new family and location, but her orphan identity is further underscored by the cinematography throughout the film. From the initial scenes, it is apparent that we are watching the journey of Frida, the child protagonist, and her experience of loss and enforced transition.

The opening scenes of the film are also telling in that they challenge conventional expectations surrounding the concepts of orphanhood and loss during childhood. Frida is playing *Uno, dos, tres, toca la pared* (or *Grandmother's Footsteps* in English). A fellow player approaches her to ask why she is not crying. Frida remains silent and gazes into the sky to observe the fireworks that are lighting up the city around them (see Figure 65). The spectator will later realise that Frida's playmate is insinuating that Frida should be crying about the recent death of her mother. Simón sets the stage here for the confusion that Frida will experience throughout the film and her struggle to make sense of what is happening to her. These expectations tie in with the theme of the HIV/AIDS virus that runs through the narrative, as Thomas explains:

While on the surface the film is not really about HIV/AIDS, but rather the young protagonist's experience of mourning, it nonetheless prompts viewers to contemplate the crises that lie beyond the frame in addition to the losses writ large within it, sharing the child's view of her immediate bereavement and also sensing the broader socio-political implications of her loss. (Thomas 2019, p. 196).

The socio-political implications of her loss are tied up in stigma, something else that Frida must, subconsciously in some cases, navigate throughout the narrative.



Figure 65 Frida plays the game in *Estín 1993*

The game ends for Frida as she moves, her shoulders sink, and her stance is visibly deflated as she reflects on the question posed to her by her playmate. When fireworks erupt above the tower block flats, making a sudden entrance to the playful street scene, Frida diverts her gaze to the skies. In a shot-reverse shot sequence, the viewer may note the light and colours of the fireworks reflected across Frida's face. This is perhaps an apt symbolic foreshadowing of the rest of the film, where the narrative will deftly yet subtly articulate sudden social-political change and its impact on the child's daily life. The subsequent shot of Frida offers her face in focus in the central foreground of the frame, as she stares up at the fireworks with a solemn look of bewilderment. We will see this type of gaze repeated throughout this first act of the film and it plays a crucial part in the cinematic establishing of Frida's orphanhood.

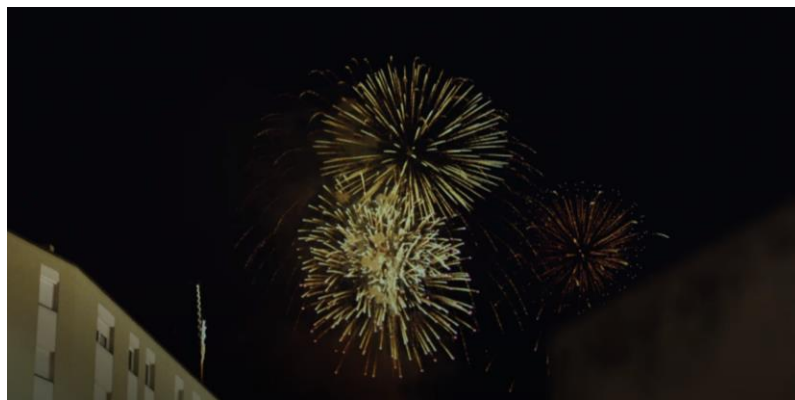


Figure 66 Fireworks above the street



Figure 67 Frida watches the fireworks

Director of Photography Santiago Racaj outlined why this initial sequence is crucial in our interview:

[W]e see the fireworks and we see the girl who's looking at them with this connection that these fireworks that she's watching, what we're doing for the viewer is giving them access, so they can experience what it's like in the world that surrounds her. From then on, the first sequence, everything is already constructed from this view. We've been focussed on the viewpoint of a child

who is seeing the world around her with a certain lack of understanding. (Racaj 2020, Appendix interview 1, pp. 211-212)

Frida's status as an orphan is indeed accentuated by the camerawork. In an early scene, a behind-the-shoulder shot follows Frida's darkened silhouette as she walks tentatively down a long corridor, eventually entering an empty bedroom. A panning shot scans the room from right to left, displaying a bed stripped bare, with a suitcase and a handbag strewn on top of the mattress. The camera moves slowly to find Frida, who gazes solemnly around the empty room, before seating herself in an armchair in the corner. The scene then transitions to one that reveals a room full of adults, framed by the doorway. The adults are packing things into boxes, gradually emptying the room of any objects and belongings. The camera pans right to show Frida who is looking into the room. This sequence of events leaves us with the first hints that Frida is on the brink of a transition. Indeed, Jones and Perriam have noted how the camerawork functions to support this division visually, presenting the salience of family both as a dependable framework for Frida's coming of age and as a site of displacement (2019, p. 87). The sense of loss is also denoted by the emptying of the apartment around her and the separation between the adult and child worlds is accentuated by the borders of doorframes and walls. This scene also functions immediately to situate the spectator with Frida's point of view through the POV and side profile shot which establishes that the viewer is seeing what Frida sees (see Figures 68 and 69).



Figure 68 The adults pack up the contents of the room.



Figure 69 Frida watches from the corridor

The camerawork skilfully conveys the subtleties of the child's experience of the changing environment and aligns the spectator with the nuances of Frida's perspective. As Racaj explained, this meant visually exploring the senses, feelings and viewpoints of the child:

[T]odo nuestro esfuerzo iba dedicado a que el espectador conectara con la manera en la que esa niña ve al mundo adulto alrededor, la pérdida, que es la pérdida más fuerte que uno puede experimentar en el mundo, que es la pérdida de sus padres, y que el espectador sintiera todo el rato la incomprensión de ella, la rabia y la falta. Es decir, esa falta de comprender por qué ocurre esto. Es una niña todavía muy pequeña. Entonces todo era como un equilibrio muy sutil, porque era rigurosa la creación de punto de vista; el espectador solo puede saber las cosas a la vez que las sabe ella. Tienes que recibir todas las sensaciones, los sentimientos a la vez que ella en la pantalla.

All our efforts were concentrated on getting the viewer to connect with the way in which this girl views the adult world around her—her loss, which is the hardest loss a child can experience, becoming “alone in the world”, in inverted commas, the loss of her parents, and getting the viewer to have a sense throughout the film of her lack of understanding, her anger and her inability... that inability to understand why something is happening. She is a girl who is still very young. So, it was all a very subtle balance because it was tough, creating the point of view; the viewer can only be aware of things at the same time as when she becomes aware of them. You have to receive all of the feelings at the same time as she does on screen. (2020 Appendix interview 1, p. 195)

The opening camerawork, then, lays the foundations for the film's viewer to associate directly with the perspective of the child and the loss she experiences, which will later enable the spectator to view the development of her agency. Racaj's explanation of the camerawork processes clarifies the film's objective of aligning the spectator with Frida's sensorial experience and journey of understanding. As Sarah Thomas asserts,

[F]ocalizing the events of a film through a child's perspective can also lead adult spectators to consider from an ethical or empathetic standpoint the child's difference in agency as well as his or her bodily or emotional realities, and how these are different from the adult's. (Thomas 2019, p. 12)

This kind of framing simultaneously works to depict changing iterations of the family unit, as will be explored later in this chapter. These initial scenes begin to present Frida's identity as an orphan child:

La película muestra, de forma magistral y desde la mirada de la niña, la expresión de los complejos procesos psíquicos que acompañan a la protagonista mientras atraviesa una circunstancia vital traumática.

The film shows, masterfully and from the girl's point of view, the expression of the complex psychological processes that the protagonist experiences as she goes through a traumatic life circumstance. (Tardio 2018, p. 1)

The editing work of Ana Pfaff is essential in the masterful execution of this perspective, and in conveying the rhythm and sensorial elements of Frida's experience in the film. Frida's status as orphan is imperative for the narrative and crucial outside of the narrative, as a way for the film to draw attention to the children orphaned as a result of the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Spain in the 1980s and 1990s. In many Spanish films that centre their action around the figure of the orphan child, this character often becomes a proxy for the representation of a generation of children orphaned (for example, as a result of the Civil War), and in some cases is a political transformation, becoming a *víctima fundacional* (Grandis 2015, p. 266). I argue, however, that this is not the case for *Estiu 1993*. While the narrative does offer us a window into Frida's suffering, at the same time, we are spectators to processes of transition, self-discovery and the child's agentic unravelling of change. The film is indeed powerful as it gives voice to the relatively untold stories of loss experienced by many Spaniards who lost their parents to the AIDS crisis.

Whilst the representative value Frida holds for a wider cohort of now grown-up children is important, it is still helpful to note the ways that the film tracks Frida's individual story, experiencing the process of adoption and the psychological journey of grief. Marga and Esteve, Frida's aunt and uncle, and now adoptive parents, struggle to deal with her behaviour. As a review in the *Hollywood Reporter* puts it: 'soon Frida is not only orphaned, but also starting to feel as though she's living among the enemy' (Holland 2017, unpaginated). The divide between Frida and her new family unit is therefore apparent, highlighted by visual borders and overheard snippets of conversation. Various scenes include conversations which are overheard, but that the child Frida does not participate in, reminding us of the way Saura's *Cría cuervos* uses visual devices to show that young Ana (Torrent) overhears conversations not intended for her ears. In scenes that echo

images from *El espíritu de la colmena* (Erice 1973), Frida and her cousin/adoptive sister Anna find refuge from the confusing adult world in the realm of play, as I will explore. Further to this, as Ballesteros, in a study of post war films, has observed that the act of presenting the socio-cultural changes through the eyes of the female orphan protagonist also puts a refreshing emphasis on the child's perspective, without becoming co-opted as a stand-in for victimhood:

Representar la realidad de los años oscuros de la posguerra desde los ojos de una niña es un acto político, es renunciar a la mirada adulta hegemónica, al estado de dominación, al cuerpo político masculino, para dar la autonomía al cuerpo infantil.

Representing the reality of the dark post-war years from the eyes of a young girl is a political act, it is to renounce the hegemonic adult gaze, the state of domination, the male body politic, to give autonomy to the child's body. (Ballesteros 1996, p. 233)

Throughout the film, we see the hegemonic realms of the adults who exist in Frida's world and her separation from these adult spaces, and the use of cinematography renders this divide visible. For example, in one scene we are reminded of Frida's orphan status, as the adults around her in the butcher's shop discuss the death of her mother due to, what the audience realises is, AIDS-related pneumonia. Whilst the adults discuss the events leading to Frida's adoption, the camera remains at Frida's level. The shot presents spectators with her profile, her nose pressed up against the glass divide that covers the various meats for sale (see Figure 70). This focus exemplifies the director's desire for Frida to be the focus of the story 'siempre tuve muy claro que la niña debía llevar el viaje de la película' (I was always certain that the girl should be the one to steer the storyline) (Simón, cited in Petrus 2017).

The conversation among the adults demonstrates the lack of education surrounding the AIDS virus at the time, as the participants speculate on whether pneumonia or some other illness is the one involved in the death of Frida's mother. Moreover, the camera positioning and the glass divide accentuate the segregation of the groups and the adult/child binary. At this point in the narrative, no one has yet explained to Frida what has happened and the adults in her world still tend to talk about her and not to her. It is only the other child in the room, Frida's adoptive sister Anna, who moves to include Frida in the discussion. As Anna asserts 'ahora es mi hermana' (now she is my sister) the camera pans back from right to left, remaining at the eye level of the children to show Anna. The visual emphasis here, then, is on children's camaraderie within the adult sphere that often isolates them. This camerawork foreshadows Frida and Anna's later retreats, side-by-side, into the realm of play, from which they harness agency.



Figure 70 The camera at Frida's level as the adult conversation takes place over her head

The socio-political implications of her loss are tied up in a stigma, something else that Frida must, subconsciously in some cases, navigate throughout the narrative. The subject of stigma was something that outreach workers highlighted during our interview:

It was also a time when it wasn't talked about. No one said they had HIV, that they were infected with HIV or they had AIDS, and only gave out information in dribs and drabs and you can't tell anyone what was being talked about. We don't say anything to the children because they're going to let it slip. They're going to go to school and say "you know my dad is poorly with something, I don't know what" so, also, people said they died of pneumonia. (Interview Appendix 2)

From these comments from the outreach workers, we see that AIDS orphans experienced the intergenerational transmission of stigma and discrimination. According to Erving Goffman's definition, stigma refers to an attribute that is 'deeply discrediting' (Goffman 2009, p. 10). Undoubtedly, those who were impacted by the HIV/AIDS virus were stigmatised thanks to the 'deviant' behaviours that often led them to become seropositive. Goffman sets out 'blemishes of character' as a category of stigmatization (Goffman 2009, p. 10). In the film, there are scenes in which the lifestyle and habits of Frida's parents are stigmatised by her grandparents and clearly viewed as blemishes of character. Frida further experiences stigmatisation in the village due to her orphanhood. The film reflects on these instances of stigma and the limited knowledge around the virus at the time of the film's setting. Additionally, it shows the little information that AIDS orphans were told about their situation. I would further argue that it encourages viewers to consider the experiences of childhood, and that the identity of orphanhood cannot always be conveniently categorised under the heading of victim. Rather, the focus on the stigma that Frida herself faces allows us to move away from the adult gaze and instead centre the child's means of understanding her own life experiences. Furthermore, these initial scenes often direct our attention to the fact that play will be an important element of the narrative and perhaps the space that Frida will use to process the dramatic change that faces her.

2. New Places to Play

In this section, I turn to analyse the second act of the film with reference to the paradigm of the playspace as heterotopia. In line with Rachel Randall's analysis (2017, p. 74), I posit that spaces of play can offer modes of relational agency to the children in the narrative. Where the film depicts Frida's gradual coming to terms with the loss of her mother, recourse to play becomes the stage for frequent displays of agentive behaviour in this second portion of the film. The instances of play that I will outline in this section are illustrative of Frida finding her voice.

In one early scene, Frida is playing with and getting to know her cousin Anna through the act of dress up and role play. For this dressing-up sequence, Frida enlists her cousin Anna to play the role of younger Frida and Frida herself plays the role of her own deceased mother, during her battle with an immune system compromised by the HIV virus. The play scene here functions to depict the loss that was felt by the devastating effects of the virus on families and children throughout Spain. The playacting also demonstrated that children were anything but passive spectators of this process, and we see this as they play out their memories of loss, perhaps unknowingly pointing to a subtle critique of the late response in policy around the virus by the Spanish government in the 1980s. Frida and Anna play out the dynamic between Frida and her deceased mother. Anna, (playing the role of young Frida), asks repeatedly to play, as Frida lays sprawled out in the chair (playing the role of her own mother), explaining that she is feeling too sick to play with her. *Estiu 1993*, then, almost imitates the scene of play from Saura's earlier film discussed in Chapter Two, adapting it to address instead the social impacts of the AIDS epidemic on Spanish youth. The cousins' role-play articulates Frida's experiences of the AIDS virus within her family sphere and the process of watching her mother's health deteriorate:

ANNA: Mami, ¿quieres jugar conmigo?

FRIDA: Estoy la cantidad de cansada. Necesito descansar, hija mía. Me duele todo el cuerpo...pero pregunta más veces.

ANNA: Mami, ¿quieres jugar conmigo?

FRIDA: Enróllate, déjame descansar

(ANNA: Mummy, do you want to play with me?

FRIDA: I'm so very tired. I need to rest, sweetheart. I am in pain all over...ask again.

ANNA: Mummy, do you want to play with me?

FRIDA: That's enough, let me rest.)



Figure 71 Frida and Anna play-act

Frida is active in using the process of creative play to communicate to her new sibling the interactions with illness and death that she has only recently experienced. The heterotopic space of the play realm enables Frida to bring Anna into this world that is ‘neither strictly in our imagination, nor in the truly external world’ (Winnicott 1971. p. 70). This realm of play is off limits to adults, emphasised by the shot in which Frida’s uncle passes through the scene (Figure 72). Where Frida is in the centre of the shot, her uncle is cut out of the frame. His fleeting presence seems not to interrupt the flow of the play, and the child protagonists return quickly to their play-acting. Fascinatingly, the toy dolls that sit below the girls at the bottom of the frame (see Figures 71 and 72) are dressed in similar clothes to the girls themselves. We can read this as a visual nod to the importance of playing practices and roleplay in children’s agency.



Figure 72 Esteve passes through the scene.

Another scene of Frida at play takes place in a local park. When Frida trips and cuts her leg, her playmate, Irene, instinctively rushes to her aid (Figure 73). Irene’s mother is looking on. She screams at Irene not to touch Frida, as she sprints over and pulls her away from her playmate. The tense moments of this scene, as Frida’s aunt Marga is frustrated by Irene’s mother’s dramatic reaction and Frida articulates her pain, reminds the spectator of the presence of HIV in Frida’s life. This scene demonstrates the lack of understanding of the virus that prevailed in society in the early 1990s. Jones and Perriam elucidate on this by saying:

Mapped discordantly onto the history of progressive Catalunya within a highly liberalized Spain by the early 1990s is a micro-history of ill-informed and prejudice-ridden social attitudes to HIV and AIDS. (Jones and Perriam 2019, p. 89)

Where the progressive nature of Catalunya may be up for debate in the political arena, Frida's status as an AIDS orphan specifically is of great relevance and her return to play despite these prejudice-ridden social attitudes can work as her own form of resistance to the prejudices she faces.



Figure 73 Irene runs to Frida's aid and her mother shouts.

We also find that a great deal of the play scenes between Frida and Anna take place in the outside space of the garden and the Catalan countryside. Ballesteros has explored the relevance of the outside and inside settings in *El espíritu de la colmena* (Erice 1973):

Los espacios exteriores abiertos, el bosque, el mar y la playa son también lugares de liberación para las protagonistas. El paisaje verde y exuberante y la amplitud de la playa donde las niñas juegan en libertad, contrastan con la oscuridad y la represión relacionadas con los espacios interiores de la casa paterna o de la escuela.

(The open exterior spaces, the forest, the sea and the beach are also places of liberation for the protagonists. The lush green landscape and the breadth of the beach where the girls play freely, contrast with the darkness and repression associated with the interior spaces of the family home or school). (Ballesteros 1996, p. 241)

We see this contrast of spaces in Estiu 1993, and the settings of free play are in the garden and sometimes the outhouse. Moments of tension, on the other hand, usually occur in the kitchen, in the interior of the house. In one scene of outside play, to give a concrete example, we watch Frida lead Anna into the woods to play a game of hide-and-seek. We later realise that Frida has no intention of finding Anna again, leading Anna to fall and break her arm. The moment of tension and anger then unfolds in the kitchen, back in the adult sphere, when Marga is short-tempered and frustrated with Frida. The hide-and-seek in the garden might have been Frida's way of explaining

to Anna the lack of control that she is experiencing following her enforced transition, and also a way for her to recoup some control in her immediate sphere. According to Barritt et al. ‘the fun of hide and seek lies in the dialectical tension in “together, but alone,” the process of playing hide and seek means the children can be at once present and absent in the world’ (Barritt et al. 1983, p. 155). Similarly, in the previous chapter we saw how the children of *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* participated in hide and seek games to create a world that was inaccessible to adults. In *Estiu 1993*, Frida experiments with this game with her cousin, leaving her not to be found in the same way as she feels she has been left out following her upheaval from urban Barcelona to the Catalan countryside. The girls play in a world in which the death and pain experienced in historical reality coalesce with fantasy and adventure. The camera often follows Frida and offers close-up shots of the objects of her visual attention. These kinds of shots allow the spectator to view the world through Frida’s eyes, using a distinct kind of focalisation. Lury has stressed that the shots which follow the child character often accentuate their transgressive nature:

The motif of movement is sustained via the most common framing of the children, which is from behind, with the camera seemingly trying to catch up with them as they walk and run, round and up and down the streets and passages of the village, over the nearby fields and up the rocks and cliffs. (Lury 2010, p. 288)

We see this image of Frida and Anna as they trudge through the forest, accentuating their transgressive potential as they traverse different settings and the importance of the outside world as a liminal space. Moreover, much like Magritte’s famous painting *Not To Be Reproduced* (1937), this kind of shot arguably instils the spectator with a desire to see what lies ahead of them, but the film remains on this destabilizing haptic, sensorial track. We witness the journey of the children into the forest but after Frida leaves Anna waiting in a tree, the narrative then cuts to Frida playing alone and we are left to piece together what has happened. As a result, the (adult) spectator experiences some of the unknowingness felt by children experiencing traumatic change in adult-centric environments.



Figure 74 Frida leads Anna into the woods

The shot in *Estiu* shown in Figure 74, in which we follow Frida and Anna, also exemplifies this suturing of subjectivity; we follow the girls' journey into the heart of the forest area. Frida's act of defiance, in incidentally causing Anna to injure herself, then leads to disputes between her adoptive parents about her disobedient behaviour. The cinematography of this outside hide-and-seek scene exemplifies transitional girlhoods on screen. For example, we follow Frida in the outside garden spaces with POV and over-the-shoulder shots. This kind of movement and cinematography in child-centred cinema is a device that looks towards the possibility of childhood as transgressive.

The importance of the playspace in enabling the child protagonists to gain voice and agency within the narrative is also something woven into the foundational fabric of the creative filmmaking process. In a public discussion, Isabel Rocatti, who plays the grandmother, spoke of how Simón spent two months improvising with the young actresses. Scenes of this play and improvisation can also be found in the DVD extras on the Avalon DVD edition of the film. Rocatti explains where this kind of pre-production play transpired:

Això va ser el que tècnicament s'anomena pre-producció de la pel·lícula...vam estar específicament el nucli central familiar i les dues nenes i els pares adoptius, van estar dos mesos treballant en situ a la zona en la Garrotxa ... a la casa real on créixer Carla. Van estar dos mesos improvisant amb les nenes, la relació, els conflictes, cadascun dels passos que van a narrar en la pel·lícula.

(This was what is technically called pre-production of the film...Specifically, we were the central family nucleus and the two adoptive parents and girls, they spent two months working on location. the area in the Garrotxa ... and in the actual house where Carla grew up. They spent two months improvising with the girls, the relationship, the conflicts, every shift that the film played out). (Rocatti 2018)

In effect, this kind of agentive play became a key part of the filmmaking process on and off-screen. Although Davis has argued that 'the house in La Garrotxa is also isolated, enclosed by forest and

hills' (2020, p. 129) and represented a sense of confinement, I argue that the girls use play to escape from the confinement that the house represents.



Figure 75 Frida is shown fixing her bike.

The image of the child and the bicycle is a motif we have seen in every film in this thesis. *Estiu 1993* is no exception to this; we find Frida on the floor of the family's workshop, attempting to remove the stabiliser wheels of her bicycle (see Figure 75). Certainly, we may be inclined to read the removal of stabilisers of the bike as a coming-of-age process. As part of Frida's journey, the removal of stabilisers seems to distil her desire for autonomy and agency. I turn now to consider how we can detect such agency when considering the concept of the family unit.

3. Framing the Family

Estiu 1993 also presents opportunities to think critically about the structure of the family. As the literature review explored, during the decades following Spain's transition to democracy, political change brought on demographic change, which in turn saw the family unit undergo, in some regards, notable transformation. This section will explore the third act of the film with due reference to the notion of the changing family unit. With the renovation of the Spanish Constitution in 1978 and the reformation of the Código Civil in 1981, there was a promotion of equality between men and women; no discrimination against children born out of wedlock; depenalization of adultery and contraception, and divorce became legal (Brooksbank-Jones 1997, p.40). Consequently, Spanish society saw the recognition of non-traditional families that had existed for years. Oliva et al. (2014) have identified an increasing number of non-traditional families in Spain in recent years, including single-parent, stepfamilies, adoptive, same-sex parent and multiple-birth families. There is cinematic precedence for the representation of these socio-cultural changes. Many of these transformations of the traditional nuclear family, as well as structures that

break away from it completely, are depicted in the films of Pedro Almodóvar.⁷⁶ We also see some of these changes in *Estiu 1993*. Simón presents us with a seemingly liberal, eco-friendly family that live in the picturesque Catalan countryside. Whilst the family unit we see is still a heteronormative, traditional nuclear family, the AIDS crisis of the previous decade means that they become an adoptive family.

As I have noted, the traditional family unit propagated by the Catholicism of the Franco regime was transformed following the end of the regime ‘y la transición demográfica implicó también profundos cambios en la configuración de las familias’ (‘and the demographic transition also implied profound changes in the configuration of families’) (Roigé 2006, p. 16). As a result, it is not possible to outline one sole model of the family in Catalonia or Spain. What we can note, however, is that the unit of the family has had continued importance in both Spanish and Catalan culture. Roigé categorises countries from Southern Europe as those in which the family structure has maintained its valued status:

Los países del sur de Europa muestran una fuerte debilidad en cuanto, a las políticas familiares... Contamos, por ello, con un modelo fuertemente familista, que se apoya en la familia y unas fuertes redes familiares como solución de la debilidad de la protección pública que reciben las familias.

(The countries of southern Europe have a demonstrate a real wekaness where family-centred policies are concerned. We therefore rely on a strongly family-oriented societal structure, which relies on the family and strong family networks as a solution to the lacking social welfare support that families receive.) (Roigé 2006, p. 13)

⁷⁶ In both *Julietta* (Almodóvar 2016) and *Todo sobre mi madre* (Almodóvar 1999), for example, the director incorporates the idea of the missing child into the narrative. In *Volver* (Almodóvar 2006) *La mala educación* (2004) and *¿Qué he hecho yo para merecer esto?!* (Almodóvar 1984) we are shown the death of the father figure. Indeed, as Amago underscores, fathers are not often present in the director’s narratives. He also points to Paul Julian Smith’s observation that Almodóvar’s characters are often ‘akin to Spaniards of the Transition, miraculous orphans deprived of a dreaded and ridiculed Father, whom they would prefer to disavow’ (Smith et al. 2000, p. 19). Successful Spanish prime-time sitcoms have also depicted these shifting unorthodox familial groups, including *Médico de la familia* (Écija 1995-9).

Scholars including Bestard and Llobera have explored how the family and kinship in Catalonia are also intertwined with the rhetoric surrounding nationalism. Llobera specifically draws attention to the Catalan concept of *Pairalisme*, translating it as the idea of ‘rural familism.’ He further notes that even in contemporary society, Catalan politicians will include metaphorical language that incorporates *Pairalisme* and familial notions in their discourse (Llobera 2005).⁷⁷ Although we do not see this concept of nationalism explicitly in the film, it will inform our viewing of the Catalan family on-screen.



Figure 76 The children rehearse for *gegants i capogrossos*

It is imperative that we also take into account the concepts of family, tradition, and the culture of the *pueblo* if we are to consider the socio-cultural setting of the film: these work to highlight Frida’s transition from city to pueblo, from family to family. Family life in post Franco Spain frequently took place in spaces of cultural festivities, as we witness in Simón’s film. ‘Popular *fiestas* of all kinds have taken on a new lease of life since 1976 ... the people in general have been given back the initiating role’ (Lawlor and Rigby 1998, p. 330). There is one noteworthy scene in the film in which the family attend *gegants i capogrossos* (giants and bigheads), a common element of many festivals held in villages throughout Catalonia. The scene depicts Frida standing with her new family, looking on at the proceedings, as local children rehearse the dance to take part in the festival (Figure 76). We have seen these figures used previously as symbolism in Spanish cinema by Almodóvar. In *La mala educación* (Almodóvar 2004), Ignacio and Manuel discuss their murderous plan, speaking in hushed tones in front of the giant head costumes in a museum (see Figure 77). In that instance, the heads seem menacing and are utilized to convey the forthcoming monstrosity of their relationship and of the murder of their brother and former lover. In *Estiu 1993*, it is as if the heads are reflecting Frida’s turning point. She finds herself in a new family, an environment that is foreign to her upbringing in the metropolitan Barcelona. The coming-of-age process that is

⁷⁷ This could be where the concept of *omertà* or ‘más vale que te calles si no quieres salir trasquilado’ in Catalonia comes from, ultimately.

brought on for her prematurely by the loss of both her parents means that she must, in many ways, put on a mask. We could also read the festival as a reflection of children trying to find their place in a world made for adults (giants). Developing this further, the presence of the giant dolls could be read as symbolic of the perspective of children on the adult world. Conventionally, giants in fairy tales usually take the role of antagonist or the terrifying character. They also come to represent a satire of society in works such as *Gulliver's Travels* (Swift 1726) and *Big* (Marshall 1988). Frida's trajectory in the participation in the festival can be read as a development of agency. As she learns to negotiate her new environment and peers, one of the final scenes shows Frida herself leading the procession to open the feste (see Figure 78).



Figure 77 *La mala educación* (Pedro Almodóvar, 2004).



Figure 78 Frida leads the procession.

Thus, family and tradition are interconnected in scenes of the film. When her grandparents visit, the adults erupt into discussion about Frida's care and the frequency of the grandparents' visits. Carmen Gauch Valls reminds us of the importance of 'las relaciones de parentesco' or kinship and the role of the grandparents in caring for grandchildren:

Dada la situación actual, en un momento en que la mujer ha entrado de lleno en el mercado laboral, junto con la falta de infraestructuras que se responsabilicen de los menores (tanto en las etapas infantiles como en edades mayores) y, en muchos casos, la precariedad económica, determina un papel clave de los mayores el momento de la llegada de los nietos.

Given the current situation, at a time when women have fully entered the labour market, together with the lack of infrastructure available to support minors (both in the childhood years and later years) and, in many cases, economic precariousness, means that the grandparents play a key role when the grandchildren arrive. (Valls 2006, p. 185)

The grandparents' visits to the countryside seem to hint that the *avis* had a great deal of involvement in childcare for Frida back in Barcelona. In a scene of intense family discussion about her upbringing, in the dining room, Frida begins to play under the table. The adults' discussion turns to Frida's parents and the grandmother makes indirect reference to her daughter's past:

LOLA: Neus dejó bien claro lo que quería. Lo dejó escrito en su carta. Es un tema legal.

FRIDA: ¿Qué carta?

ABUELA: Esta hija mía era una inconsciente... Todos sabemos que siempre tomaba malas decisiones.

ESTEVE: Joder mamá.

ABUELA: Vergüenza os debería dar. Y a ti más, que podrías haber acabado igual.

LOLA: Vale ya, mamá.

ABUELO: María, ya vale.

FRIDA: ¿Y ahora quién vive en mi casa?

(LOLA: Neus made it very clear what she wanted. She put it in her letter. It's a legal issue.

FRIDA: What letter?

GRANDMOTHER: This daughter of mine was thoughtless... We all know that she always made bad decisions.

ESTEVE: Fuck, mum.

GRANDMOTHER: Shame on you. And to you more finished, that there could be the same.

LOLA: Okay, that's enough mum.

GRANDFATHER: Maria, that's enough.

FRIDA: And who lives in my house now?)

Through this conversation, we see how Frida is understanding and picking up on certain elements of the conversation, yet her questions are ignored. The intergenerational tensions and misinformation about the contraction of HIV are notable in the implicit references of the grandmother. She is framed in enclosed space underneath the adults' feet and the table legs (Figure 79). Again, the divide between the adults' world and that of the child takes physical form in the shape of the table. We see the divide between the grandparents and the parents, and also the adult/child divide. Frida is symbolically walled-out from any discussion about her future and instead turns to play under the table.

The enchanting sanctity of the enclosed space under the table is underscored by the shot, a side profile silhouette of the child's face in the golden hues of the light through the tablecloth hanging behind her, her head slightly raised, curious to access the adult discussion playing out within earshot. The shot is framed in the foreground by the out-of-focus legs of one of the adults who sit above her. Sound is significant here too: the adult voices speak in hushed tones and the voices mixed in the ambience of cutlery clashing together in the kitchen emphasise how this information envelops Frida's world without her being explicitly told all the details directly. However, Frida then breaks into the adult conversation, emerging from under the table quite suddenly, to ask a question about her mother's letter being discussed. Inserting herself into the adult's conversation, Frida disrupts the separation.

This kind of structural separation is also further accentuated in a later scene, in which Frida's adoptive parents engage in a slightly heated debate about Frida's behaviour. Following a game of hide-and-seek in which Frida led her adoptive sister Anna into the forest, Anna broke her arm. In the scene shown in Figures 80 and 81, Frida is playing outside on her bike. She overhears the muffled tones of Marga and Esteve, debating her behaviour. Here, the walls of the house emphasise the divide, as Frida remains in the outside space of the garden. Visual levels in the scene further underscore the hierarchy present in the adult/child dynamic; we view Frida on ground level outside looking up at the positioning of the adults in an upstairs. Frida and Anna find an escape from these structures as they venture to spaces of outside play. Interestingly, Llobera has considered the ways that the house is related to the position of the family and the nation in Catalan culture. He explains that the

Ancestral home (*casa parial*) was seen as the first circle of belonging upon which the nation was built; the house maintained language and culture, a particularly important thing in a country where the state was alien. (Llobera 2004, p. 56)

Whilst this house may serve to strengthen the importance of the family unit, it also functions to emphasise the alienation faced by Frida due to the dominance of the family structure. Hence, a great deal of the aesthetics of these scenes underscores the divide between Frida as the orphan child and the family unit. Not only does this serve as a critical assessment of the family unit as a central nucleus for children, but these scenes also lead to her turning to play and to physical or symbolic space as methods of harnessing agency. Where scholars may argue that this kind of camerawork and cinematography can lead spectators to view Frida as a passive witness—Davis, for example, labels Frida as passive and static (2020, pp. 125-126)—this kind of framing of the family works to highlight the conservatism and hierarchy still present in the nuclear family structure. As a result, the family functions as ‘both as a dependable framework for Frida’s coming of age and as a site of displacement and disturbance’ (Jones and Perriam 2019, p. 87)



Figure 79 Frida listens to the conversation from under the table



Figure 80 Frida listens to her adoptive parents argue



Figure 81 Marga and Esteve argue inside, shot from Frida's perspective.

In Christopher Pullen's study of AIDS orphans and the politics of performance in documentary film, questions are raised around the inclusion of AIDS orphans and children and the fine line between presenting an intimate, emotional value and their employment as a 'sacrificial other' and the risk of the image of the AIDS orphan becoming a commodity. Pullen points out that:

On the one hand, AIDS narratives provide intense emotional display (and the opportunity for transgressive performance), which may enable change, on the other the character role is fixed as an outsider. (Pullen 2008, p. 666)

Seemingly, Frida is presented to be 'outside the ordinary according to prevailing dominant discourses of childhood' (O'Connor 2011, p. 286). Frida is an outsider as the AIDS character and also an outsider of the family unit. By contemplating her positioning and construction as outsider in the film, we can reflect on wider discourses surrounding the AIDS orphan in Spanish society. My analysis demonstrates how we still see the progression of the child's agency and autonomy in spite of this. It is through the process of being marginalised or othered that an enhanced desire for agency and autonomy is brought about. The emotional scenes in which we view Frida speak to a transgressive potential in the way that we remember this part of Spain's history and also the way that we view children. Whilst these scenes reveal the flaws of the family structure, they are often framed by alternate scenes in which Frida demonstrates the practice of Magical Thinking, as the next section will observe.



Figure 82 Frida prays with her grandmother

4. Spiritual Connections

As we have seen, the camerawork, editing, and sound of *Estiu 1993* masterfully aligns the viewer with the child's experiences, creating a heightened cinematic proximity between the spectator and the young protagonist. Consequently, we are drawn into the realm of Frida's imagination. These instances are repeated throughout the third and fourth acts of the film, in which the narrative focuses on examples of Magical Thinking and play. This section performs a close reading of episodes in the film that illustrate two examples of Magical Thinking and further investigates how they adapt sacred and spiritual practices.

There are several scenes in *Estiu 1993* in which Frida works to come to terms with the loss of her mother, yet simultaneously enters the world of her imaginary, in which she can leave the present and speak on the telephone with her deceased mother. This kind of post-mortem communication is something we find included in the film from the outset. The viewer may understand this kind of Magical Thinking as simply a mechanism to escape from these harrowing realities, but upon closer inspection we see that, in the case of Frida especially, Magical Thinking enables her to maintain a connection with her mother, and control their relationship, even after her death. Whether consciously or not, Frida seems to access the comforts of religious doctrine through this act. The telephone call to her deceased mother is a spiritual act which speaks to the Catholic and conservative outlook which underpins the religious Catalan identity represented by Frida's grandparents.

Sarah Thomas posits that the inclusion of imaginative and magical agency in child-centred films helps to present a 'nuanced representation of child subjectivity, presenting a rich inner world standing in marked contrast to the external events' (Thomas 2014, p. 54). As Thomas also outlines, the magical nature of this agency helps to bring the (adult) spectator into the child's world. As a

result, the adult spectator is able to follow and understand the child orphan's experience, of events, conversations and places. This is achieved in scenes in *Estim 1993* where the spectator is aligned with Frida's view thanks to over the shoulder shots as she imagines and plays creatively. In this manner, the film pulls the spectator into Frida's world, as the narrative of the film switches between the adult world and Frida's more magical experiences with play and imagination.

In one scene, Frida brings a blouse to a statue of the Madonna, intending that the figurine will pass this on to her mother (Figure 83). She has also previously brought cigarettes to the statue. The ritualistic way she visits the shrine speaks to the importance of memory practices. The location of the shrine in the garden lends further weight to the argument that the garden can be seen as the child's world and as an empowering 'in-between' space (Thomas 2019, p. 194). Frida leaves the house to visit the shrine, crossing from the domestic indoor space to the outdoor sacred playspace.



Figure 83 Frida leaves a blouse for her mother

Frida is shown in close-up shots as she inspects the shrine, pausing to stroke the face of the figurine. The soundscape highlights the countryside setting, as birds call, crickets chirp and we hear the burbling sounds of a river. Frida begins to trudge out of the magical forest area and the film cuts to a shot of the child looking up at the sky, and we see a shot-reverse-shot reminiscent of the earlier firework scene discussed in the opening of this chapter. In this way, the narrative jumps and cuts between vivid representations and experiences of Frida's childhood. 'This evasive nature flows into the film's formal conceit, one which foregrounds life's moment-to-moment sensory experiences' (Amaral 2018, unpaginated). Following Frida as spectators we start to notice the way that the mysterious and the magical grant her a kind of agency and control over events and the ways in which Magical Thinking transforms her understanding.

Apposite to my analysis here is Hispanic studies scholar Jordana Blejmar emphasis of Giorgio Agamben's notion that 'the realms of play and the sacred are closely linked' (Blejmar 2013, p. 48). If we consider the idea that both Agamben and Blejmar present, which contends that play derives from the realm of the sacred but also transforms it, we can make a fruitful reading of Frida's playful offering. Frida's actions exemplify Agamben's notion that play constitutes the 'topsy-turvy sacred' (Agamben 2007, p. 78). She harnesses agency by shifting the religious practice towards a more playful means of communication with her mother. This, in turn, creates 'a safe, and at times a sacred, space for new beginnings and for Frida to come to terms with her grief and loss' (Jones and Perriam 2019, p. 89). Although the place where the offering is left appears to be a religious shrine, Frida's playful offering transforms it into a more imaginative child's interpretation of this spiritual practice.

The religious practices of Frida's grandparents, which the audience witnesses in an earlier scene, have a clear influence on Frida's playful actions. Intergenerational tension is once again interrogated here, as the role of Frida's Catholic grandparents, their disagreement with Esteve and Marga about Frida's move, tells a story of a changing Spain. Following the death of Franco, the country transitioned from a Catholic state to one open to the liberalisation of society. Frida's transformation of the religious to the magical speaks to these tensions. In numerous scenes, we are presented with Frida reciting the Lord's Prayer. Where Weissburg claims that this 'childish mimicking of adult behaviour brings little comfort' (2017, unpaginated), I maintain that this is an act of transformative potential, as it is an act that allows her to navigate the process of grief and loss and adds a playful twist to religious practices in Spain. Although religious practices endure, especially conservative Roman Catholic traditions, present day Spain has experienced a shift in adherence to and observation of these practices.⁷⁸ In Frida's actions, the conservative beliefs of her grandparents meet the more liberal attitudes of her parents in the form of the shrine offering of a packet of Hidalgo cigarettes and a fashionable blouse. The incorporation of Christian imagery and practices, then, runs throughout the narrative, as does the theme of play. Ungureanu and Bradatan have explored the returning presence of religion and spirituality in European cinema:

[R]eligion cannot be simply dismissed from our lives as a useless remnant from the past. Often in disguised forms, the religious always returns; it keeps shaping our lives, informing our imaginary and dominating our thinking. Churches may have emptied in many parts of Europe, but religion seems to have found other, subtler outlets; behind the façade of a secularized world, a wide range of "spiritual experiences" gives people a new sense of belonging to a grander,

⁷⁸ Under the Partido Popular (PP) government, there was an increased importance attached to religion education classes to a student's end of course overall end of year grade (Chislett 2021, p. 27).

cosmic order, as well as of personal fulfilment. (Ungureanu and Bradatan 2014 p. 6)

We can see this kind of spirituality directly informing the imaginary of Frida. If we consider Spanish films from previous decades that have intertwined the character of the orphan child with religious experiences, a few examples are *Marcelino, pan y vino* (Ladislao Vajda, 1954), and the Joselito films. *Las niñas* (Pilar Palomero 2020) is another recent cinematic example in which we find the interplay of childhood and religion. Like *Estiu 1993*, Palomero's film is set in the 1990s. In both films, I argue that we can detect a reframing and reappropriation of conventional religious practices through means of play, which can be read as agency. The protagonist of *Las niñas* is taunted about her orphanhood by her schoolmates, despite the fact she is part of a single parent family. Hence, we can also begin to trace a trend in contemporary Spanish cinematic works towards portrayals of the orphan child that question outdated beliefs that view orphanhood as an inferior or negative identity.

Sacred and spiritual practices are an important part of the process that will leave Frida with her own autonomy. Religion, prayer, and ritualistic offering are things that Frida has grown up with and something that previously provided structure in her life. In a tumultuous time of change and confusion, the orphan child draws strength from these ways of connecting with her mother and with elements of her life from before she was orphaned. Although she begins to deal with the reality that the religion taught to her by her grandparents may not be the solution to her problems, this religious-turned-magical process allow her to ease the process of assimilation to her new settings.

In a later scene of play, Frida and Anna are inside the house. An emotional moment transpires when Anna asks Frida if she would like to speak on the phone with her mother, who, as we know, has passed away (see Figure 84). Frida hesitates momentarily before consenting. Dialling in a telephone number, Frida waits in silence as her call is not answered. This scene is exemplary of Frida's desire to connect with her mother, as she indulges in Anna's games with a glimmer of hope that her mother will indeed answer her call. What is more, these games of Magical Thinking that take place between Frida and Anna can be read as an act of solidarity. Anna is attempting to understand the loss and transition that Frida is experiencing and continues to initiate games and play with her consistently throughout the film. Frida's development of agency progresses through these acts of magical play.

Where I have endeavoured to demonstrate that Spanish cinematic depictions of the orphan child can be read as shifting away from narratives of victimisation, I acknowledge that trauma plays

a part in the trajectories of Frida and of the protagonists I have analysed in this thesis. Evidently, Frida has experienced loss which she processes in the film's narrative. Her actions might be seen as traumatic reworking or re-narrativisation of her past. The resources she draws on and ways she develops agency constitute a reaction to the trauma.

Frida's play can be viewed as a kind of transformative imagination as she adapts religious practices, parodies adult behaviours, and rejects adult control in several instances. These kinds of play offer opportunities for transformative agency, as it is a play that can bring about a kind of cognitive transformation in the way both Frida and the adults in her world interact. Simón, in the filmmaking endeavour also succeeds in connecting her own private trouble with a wider socio-historical sphere. By presenting the character of Frida, an orphan child who harnesses agency through imaginative action, Simón simultaneously questions the status quo surrounding the heteronormative nuclear family and the orphan child's place within this structure, and also the stigma that has come into being as a result of conservative attitudes towards the HIV/AIDS crisis in Spain.



Figure 84 Anna asks Frida if she would like to phone her mother.

Conclusions

Estiu 1993 brings the crisis of HIV/AIDS and the experiences of AIDS orphans to the attention of international audiences. It remains, however, a story which celebrates the developing agency of the orphan child, Frida. This is achieved by the *mise-en-scène* and Frida's agency is illustrated by various playing practices that have been discussed in this chapter. The camerawork and editing support the initial establishment of Frida's identity as an outsider in the first act of the film. The camera focus and close-up sequences align the spectator with the child's perspective, cinematically painting a picture of how their agency might be viewed differently to an adult's agency. Frida's story is informed by a socio-historical reading and scholarship which promotes a rethinking of conventional views of orphanhood. Where the orphan child has often been overdetermined as an

inactive onlooker, a closer look at children's playing practices offered a rethinking of this passive rendering of the child. Play is, in fact, the catalyst that allows Frida eventually to experience the release of her emotions and grief in the final scene of the film. As Frida and Anna jump on the bed mischievously, Esteve joins in their games by tickling and playfully wrestling with them. Frida then collapses onto the bed, initially laughing but then turn-to burst into tears. Marga asks Frida what the problem is, and Frida replies 'No lo sé' (I don't know) as she releases long bottled-up feelings. Through this intensely emotional conclusion of the film, we are reminded of the opening scene, in which play acts as a conduit for Frida to contemplate her emotional response to loss.

The film also tells us that, despite changes leading to more varied family structures in Spain in contemporary society, there remains an emphasis on the family structure as a central nucleus. It is a sometimes-stifling structure that the child must navigate. The orphan child, in particular, often finds herself placed in a dynamic of opposition to this normative familial structure. By looking at how different groups of children can be viewed as 'outside the ordinary according to prevailing dominant discourses of childhood', and the changing presentation of orphanhood on screen, we can consider how these changes 'reflect wider shifts in ideologies of childhood' (O'Connor 2011, p. 286) in the Spanish context.

Subsequently, this chapter considered the kinds of magical play present as linked to ritual and the sacred, paying close attention to the final scene of the film. Alongside this, Frida's exploration of religious practices is a transformative, strengthening potential that she finds in navigating loss. Reading Frida's actions through the lens of this theory, I demonstrated that we can trace how her magical, imaginative practices offer hope and a potential to rethink structures which negate the potential power of children's imaginary play. Imagination and magical play become fundamental to Frida's bond with her newly adopted sister, Anna, and the way that she processes the recent events of her life. I will argue that we are able to trace in the events of the plot, supported by key visual elements, how Magical Thinking shapes and guides her understanding and decisive actions.

The interview methodology provided crucial foundational knowledge on which I could base my analysis. By blending these insights from outreach workers and creative practitioners with my own reading, the chapter constitutes a novel investigation of *Estiu 1993*. Yet, this chapter has by no means presented a complete exploration of the child's relationship with trauma. Future work might usefully consider the intricacies of the traumatic event and how this informs both societal understandings of orphanhood and how, as a result, children's agency requires a polyvalent approach in academic study.

We can state, then, that the orphan remains a key figure of Spanish visual cultures in order to tell the story of the intergenerational effects of the epidemic in 1990s Spain and also to articulate the voice and demonstrate the agency of the child figure in this historical period. Where it might have been easy for the film to slip back into the stereotypical concept of the orphan as helpless victim, Simón instead demonstrates the resilience and determination of the child figure, centralising Frida's experience. Simón's direction, paired with the adept camerawork of Santiago Racaj, and also the editing work of Ana Pfaff, means that the film creates a dialogue with the child's experience and the sociohistorical and political context of the AIDS crisis. Scenes of play are deftly replicated to reproduce memories of the director's own childhood and the magical imagination of the child's world spills over into the vivid reality of loss, pulling the spectator into Frida's processes of adaptation, resilience, and agency. The readings which I establish acknowledge the child's potential to be a social actor that engages with the socio-historical context in a way that does not diminish her autonomy.

Conclusion

Growing Up and Closing the Door: Orphans, Others, and Objects.

Yo nunca, nunca he sido huérfana.

Las niñas (Pilar Palomero 2020)



Figure 85 *Las niñas* (Palomero 2020)

In the winter of 2020, Pilar Palomero's *Las niñas* premiered at the Berlinale film festival. A coming-of-age, child-centred narrative which centres on girlhood, sexuality, and religion, Palomero's film is another cinematic example of the representation and reframing of orphanhood, demonstrating the continued presence of the orphan child figure in contemporary Spanish cinema. The protagonist's navigation of her pre-teen years and Catholic schooling takes place in 1990s Spain, once again presenting the liminal nature of the orphan child against a backdrop of a Spanish society seemingly located in between more conservative traditions and rapid modernisation. In one scene, in which the group of girls return from school and sit together listening to music and chatting, a playful game of 'Yo nunca' (Never have I ever) begins. One of the young girls proclaims 'Yo nunca, nunca he sido huérfana' (Never have I ever been an orphan), shooting a look of disdain at Celia, the orphan protagonist.⁷⁹ The tense exchange brings to the fore the persistent othering of the orphan, something which has been a constant feature of child-centred Spanish cinema, notably in the films explored in this thesis. Palomero's film ends with a close-up of Celia opening her

⁷⁹ The name Celia recalls the very popular series of novels *Celia and her World* (Elena Fortún, 1929-52). The main character Celia is orphaned during the series.

mouth to sing, despite being told only to mime the words of the song ('Lunas de papel' by Carlos Naya) (see Figure 85). *Las niñas*, then, is recent film which moves away from the instrumentalization of the orphan child and centralises the child's experience

This thesis has explored the representation of the child orphan character in four Spanish films released between 1962 and 2017. The investigation sought to articulate the uniqueness of the orphan child in the Spanish context, carrying out a close reading of the child's journey throughout the narrative of each film, whilst taking into account the socio-political context to inform the analysis. Each case study chapter and close examination has been guided by principal research questions. Firstly, in contexts where there was a societal focus on large families in Spanish society during the Franco regime in the 1950s and 1960s (*la familia numerosa*), or in more recent revelations, a declining birth-rate during the 2000s, why, then, has a tendency to portray the kinless child persisted? The introduction hypothesised that the Spanish child orphan sits in a distinctive semantic milieu, when we consider the loss of life incurred by the Spanish Civil War, residual Catholicism and its emphasis on the nuclear family unit. The child orphan might well have emerged repeatedly in Spanish cinema as a reaction to rapid societal fluctuations and change, and the emphatic societal concern with the nuclear family unit. We might do well to view these iterations of the child orphan also as calls for us to reconsider understandings of childhood and adult-child power dynamics and as a reminder of children's capacity for the existence of agency outside of these archetypes and structures.

I further set out to investigate and query the tendency in a number of Spanish films, and in film scholarship, to consider the orphan child protagonist as an emblem of victimhood and passivity. As demonstrated in the literature review, numerous examples of academic work have concentrated on the depiction of the orphan child as victim. For example, Hogan has examined cinema's appropriative use of the child, citing ventriloquism as a mechanism for appropriating the child's own voice in the Francoist *cine con niño* (Hogan 2018, p. 73). Furthermore, the child in much Spanish Civil War themed cinema has been interpreted as a passive witness or an (adult) child seer. Raychaudhuri, writing on Civil War centred Spanish film, noted that 'the vulnerability of the child protagonists is made manifest in their orphanhood' (2014, p. 198). The child without parents is viewed as an even weaker, more traumatised other compared to her 'normal' child counterparts. Perhaps this is why the orphan child keeps being reborn into Spanish film, time and time again, as an emblem of victimhood. However, rather than fetishize the child's difference, in its non-adulthood, and romanticised innocence of the not fully grown state in order to trace a narrative of victimhood, my approach to the corpus of films has instead focused on the orphan's avenues for agency.

The case study chapters broke down the films' narratives into four key sections, or acts, in order to provide a clear structure, running in parallel with the narrative diegesis. The first chapter on *Tómbola* (Lucia 1962) looked at how the young star's life offscreen has at times been conflated in the scholarship with her cinematic career, painting her as a victim and a puppet. I also acknowledged some of the ways that Marisol was co-opted by the Francoist project of modernisation. At the same time, I offered novel interpretations which reflect on the character's narrative agency by bringing into the foreground her costumes, performance, transport, and roleplaying. The chapter's key conclusion was that it is possible to read *Tómbola* as representative of one of the first cinematic examples of a child beginning to disrupt the prevailing ideologies of Francoism, by exhibiting flashes of dissidence and raucous disruption throughout the film (Evans 2004, p. 129). This contention was evidenced through an in-depth evaluation of scenes which featured the child's capacity to bring about change. My reading here built on some of the previous analyses' reading of Marisol as unruly, and instead considered disruptive behaviour as a form of agency that comes with a more political dimension than simply bad behaviour.

In Chapter Two, my examination focused on *Cría cuervos* (Saura 1976) and exposed Ana's desire to disrupt the dominant hegemonic structures of her world, noting how her orphan status in fact aids her in this objective. I employed close readings which showed how the orphan children were able to negotiate the structures that confine them, reflecting on how this was possible due to the practices of play. Taking into account the girls' reframing of the family album, the power of dress-up and sociodramatic play, murderous desires and spatial agency, my exploration opened up Ana's agentic actions throughout the plot of *Cría cuervos*. Notably, this chapter concluded that Ana sought to turn her back on the conventional world presented to her inside the family home. The orphan's resistance to hegemonic, traditional trajectories comes to light through various kinds of play and ultimately demonstrates her intention to trouble the dominant, often Francoist, expectations for women, the cast shadows of which we see in Ana's objection to them.

Chapter Three explored *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* (Serrador 1976). This provided a detour from the preceding chapters, in that the analysis considered a *group* of orphan children and their challenge to archaic, ideological conceptions of the child as tied to heteronormative futurity; their orphanhood offering a monstrous alterity. Again, the examination moved in lockstep with the chronological order of events in the film, revealing how Serrador's children employ tactics of opposition to resist adult control. Additionally, and significantly, this reading contends that playing practices and murderous desires which the children possess create the environment for a unique rendering of agentic orphanhood and childhood.

Finally, the last chapter offered a study of *Estiu 1993*, contemplating orphanhood as a consequence of the HIV/AIDS crisis in 1990s Spain. This film differs from the previous case studies in that it is autobiographical cinema, with scenes of play in the countryside made in the image of the director's own childhood memories. I studied processes of agency alongside questions of adaptation and resilience, reflecting on this narrative of loss and change. The reading acknowledged the child's potential to be a social actor who engages with the socio-historical context. Markedly, I made the case that it is important to recognise agency in the actions of the child orphaned as a result of the HIV/AIDS crisis in order to counteract narratives of victimhood, which can risk minimising the child's experience, resilience and navigation of events surrounding the crisis.

Reflecting on some of the key contentions of the thesis, I considered the idea that orphanhood frequently manifests itself as a 'cultural rubric or pattern' to evoke 'situations of abandonment and helplessness' (Russek 2012, p. 136), then shifting the focus in my own analysis to agency in order to reveal that cinematic orphanhood on screen is not solely confined to the allegory of loss. In this light, the research has traced varying modes of agency throughout the filmic narratives. To do this, I called upon paradigms from the fields of Childhood Studies and Children's Geography, making the case that contemporary sociological advances in how we conceive children and childhood can inform a re-reading of orphan-centred Spanish film.

As I moved through the case study chapters, I linked my exploration of agency by threading through them several key theoretical paradigms. Broadly, these were as follows. Firstly, I grappled with Jessamy Harvey's conception of 'the adorable orphan' (2004, p. 63), using this to inform my exploration of the initial cinematic establishment of the orphan child in each film per the filmmaker's intentions and reflecting on established ideas in the previous literature on the meaning of orphanhood. Additionally, I applied Sarah Thomas' notion of Magical Thinking (2014, p. 59) to explore the orphan child's harnessing of imaginative practices which offer an alternative way of thinking through agency. Where a kind of magical, imaginative agency, might be seen as a powerless fantasy of control, I have demonstrated how it can be a catalyst for the child protagonists that prompts reflection and understanding. In concrete terms, we saw this in *Estiu 1993* when Frida transformed the garden shrine into a place of contact with her mother. In the other case study chapters, I further demonstrated how imagination and Magical Thinking work as a practice of resistance.

In a like manner, the thesis repeatedly reflected on the child's relationship to space, whether that be the physical spaces represented in the settings of the films, such as the house or the garden,

or their movement through spaces, making use of various forms of transport, including the car, the bicycle, and movement as a pack. I supported my close readings with several theories derived from Children's Geography. Moreover, the research cast a spotlight on child's play, influenced by recent advances in Childhood Studies which have argued for scholarship which plays closer attention to children's playful acts as demonstrations of agency and development.

Throughout the research, some striking themes emerged as result of analysing this particular sample of films side by side. By re-reading the four films I selected for close analysis—thematically proximate and yet taken from distinct moments in recent Spanish history—my reading has generated an analysis which considers subtleties not previously explored in academic research on Spanish film, to my knowledge. For instance, the use of the child's voice through song, the significance of hide-and-seek, and the framing of the family unit in relationship to the orphan child figure.

This, in turn, has allowed me to argue for a reframing of orphanhood and to propose a shift away from clichéd understandings of the orphan child as helpless victim. In the first chapter we saw how Marisol is indeed shown as a performative, Francoist co-optation of orphanhood. The interpretation I offered of Marisol, as a character who is in motion, posited that she could be seen as emblematic of Spain's national movement towards economic development and technocratic modernity. At the same time, however, the chapter evidenced how the agentive otherness of the orphan figure in *Tómbola* symbolises the first discernible shift towards a space in Spanish film for the non-dependent voice and agency of the child orphan.

Cría cuervos and *Estiu 1993* are both fiction films that draw on documentary techniques to align the viewer with the experience of the child's world, and I looked at some examples of this in the chapters' close readings of key scenes. The realism is achieved in both films with raw, documentary-style camerawork that gives the audience access to the child's sensory experiences, a kind of embodied viewing experience. In *Cría cuervos* and *Estiu 1993*, for example, the viewer is presented with scenes which paint a picture of the child's senses. In *Cría cuervos* the spectator experiences the feeling of flight with Ana, as pendulous camera angles and motion work with POV shots to illustrate her journey through the sky. In *Estiu 1993*, as spectators we are often aligned with Frida's eyeline, watching with her as meat is violently struck on a chopping board in a butcher's shop. As such, I traced a shift, beginning with Marisol and her flashes of dissidence, moving through to later films which attempt to underscore the agency of the child orphan character by centralising and focusing their sensory experiences. By emphasising the particular subjectivity of a child, these films, in my analysis, also make more credible child agency.

Through a consideration of filmic narratives, informed by calls to broaden definitions of children's agency in Childhood Studies, my readings recognise children's agency on screen as hybrid and multifaceted. In my application of the paradigm of spatial agency, I looked at how the child orphan's occupation of certain spaces might be read as a display of agency. By studying the movement of the orphan child through spaces and their relationship with transport, I reflected on the importance of movement as a resistance to adult-controlled structures. For example, in *Cría cuervos* we looked at how play, in the form of games of hide and seek, and the movement of the girls through the garden space, worked as a form of resistance to the adult-controlled confines of the solemn gothic house. In *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* I uncovered the occupation of the physical space of the island by the mob of children and youths, contemplating how their murderous play turned upside down previously adult controlled domains such as the church and the hotel.

Child orphans, then, seem to lurk and reappear in Spanish cinema, in part due to the legacy of the Civil War. The child orphan is a figure which preoccupies Spanish filmmakers in particular. I have shown where some previous academic readings may demonstrate how this figure is a *tabula rasa* figure on which filmmakers can build any meaning, but often have resource to only one. It should be acknowledged that this research has explored the inclusion of orphanhood in each of the films with the objective of asking what this can tell us about transformations in the politics and ideology around the child and family as these corresponded with radical political shifts in the Spanish context from 1962 to 2017. These shifts included Spain's economic modernisation, its transition from dictatorship to democracy and the socio-political changes brought about by Spain's approach to dealing with the HIV/AIDS epidemic, necessarily linking this back both to residual cultural attitudes and to intergenerational tensions occasioned by the aforementioned radical shifts. However, I have focused on how these factors have influenced beliefs about orphanhood and childhood, rather than asking whether the child can be read as an emblem of these changes.

Dominant discourses in the cultural life of Spain during the Franco regime positioned the orphan child as other, in their preference for the heteronormative nuclear family. In this sense, the character of Marisol, as studied in Chapter One, was intriguing in her otherness for audiences. Comparing this film with Ana in *Cría cuervos*, as studied in Chapter Two, we find a different presentation of orphanhood. Ana's otherness as the orphan child is exhibited as a more explicit desire to disrupt the hegemonic constructs of the nuclear family. In a like manner, the pack of kinless children who control the island in *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* are monstrous others in the way they directly contradict preconceived notions of the innocent child desiring familial unity and instead seek to destroy the adults and family structures around them. Finally, in *Estiu 1993*, Frida is shown as an outsider in her new home in a countryside village, and also due to the AIDS related

deaths of her parents. The film's narrative is once again set against a backdrop of radical societal change, as 1990s Spain continued to feel the effects of the cultural explosion of *La movida*, which began in the 1980s when Spaniards enjoyed the freedoms of a post-dictatorship society.

The analysis presented in this thesis works on the basis that childhood is a social construction, a contention aligned with the recent turn in Childhood Studies, spearheaded by James and Prout (1997, p. 8). Our understandings of children and childhood are conceived based on hegemonic structures of our social environments. As such, definitions of childhood, and therefore, orphanhood can vary based on location, time, religion, and political factors. As O'Connor puts it: 'prevailing dominant discourses' of childhood and the 'correct' growth of the child means that certain groups of children are seen as 'outsiders' or are othered' (O'Connor 2011, p. 285). Indeed, orphanhood, as we have seen, might come under this heading. The orphan protagonists scrutinised in this research are all, at various points, outsiders. I have shown how, in their otherness, these child figures are able to query dominant discourses around the Spanish family, victimhood, loss, and innocence. Thus, the research has evidenced the powerful potential of the otherness of the orphan child for re-reading child-centred films.

The thesis is the first of its kind to focus solely on the representation of the orphan child in Spanish film. A handful of articles have been published which consider depictions of orphanhood in Spanish language film, one by Jessamy Harvey and the other by Dan Russek. Russek's article argued that cinematic orphanhood is not always restricted to the metaphor of loss. Harvey's work, situated within the sociological realm, looked at how, in the 1991 adaptation of *Marcelino, pan, y vino* (Comencini 1991), Marcelino is able to narrate his own story and consequently turns away from the patriarchal family structure, situating her reading within the sociological realm. This thesis has expanded the parameters of the aforementioned articles and built on their contentions, developing them through the analysis of films spanning several decades, from the time of the Franco regime until 2017. Due to this focus specifically on kinless children, I have been able to reflect on the limitations of the family unit and the multifaceted otherness of the orphan child.

Moreover, in the final case study chapter of this thesis, I incorporated data from interviews carried out during fieldwork. As a result, I buttressed my study with original insights drawn from discussions with outreach workers and also with the film's Director of Photography. Whilst I was reluctant to overuse the information gleaned from these conversations in my study to avoid a narrowly over-determined analysis, I believe that they provide fertile ground for further scholarship. The auteurist model of film scholarship, which might focus solely on the vision of the director, can be contrasted with approaches to Film Studies which draw on conversations with

creatives working as part of the filmmaking team. My analysis looked at the example of the classroom and school as examples of spaces of control, bringing in a Foucauldian reading. Marisol's adventures in *Tómbola* began on the bus taking children to school. Ana and her sisters are seen returning to school as a new term begins at the end of *Cría cuervos*. Similarly, in *Estiu 1993*, Frida sits with her aunt at the end of the film to prepare her notebooks for the new school year. Whilst in *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* we do not see a classroom, we see the murderous children rebel and run rampage through other, related spaces in which they once may have experienced structures of authority (the church, the police station).

Alongside these institutional bodies, my exploration of *Tómbola* outlined where future research could develop critical thought on the child's own body and how it plays into discussions of agency. Paying closer attention to non-verbal practices of children in Spanish film permits a centralising of the child character's autonomy and experience of the cinematic world around them. Many of the playing practices I have presented in this thesis involve creative uses of the body and its adornments such as dress-up, performance, and the reappropriation of adult-centric spaces into playspaces. The chapter on Marisol further revealed how the bodies of child stars are co-opted and fetishized. We might consider a study of child stars and the fetishization of the youthful performing body on Spanish screens.

As the discipline develops, a growing number of film scholars are producing insightful work on the child in Spanish cinema. Sarah Thomas (2019) and Erin Hogan (2018) both offer in-depth monographs on the subject. Danielle Hipkins is directing academic work towards iterations of girlhood on Italian screens, specifically looking at girls stories and their connection with sexuality and the body politic, in her research project 'A Girl's Eye View'.⁸⁰ Erin Hogan has made the case for two iterations of cine con niño (2017), and this thesis has reflected on how the films presented here might be categorised as part of a third cine con niño genre, one made for the child's benefit, perhaps better phrased as cine *sobre* el niño. In other words, we might envisage a category of child-centred films which centres the experience and agency of the child character rather than equating their experiences in the narrative to metaphors, and this cycle emerges from my reading of the films.

Surfacing from all these works is the significance of interdisciplinarity. It is through interdisciplinary methods that we can propose original contributions to knowledge. My approach in this thesis has advocated a shift in considerations of the child character which moves in tandem

⁸⁰ <https://agirlseyereview.exeter.ac.uk/en/>

with recent directions taken by Childhood Studies, arguing that children are and must be seen as active in the construction of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and the societies in which they live (James and Prout 1997, p. 8). Moreover, my interdisciplinary critical approach has enriched the analysis offered in the case study chapters.

The main objective of this thesis was to trace the shifting representation of the orphan child across four different Spanish films, spanning the period between 1962 to 2017. I set out to show the relevance of this cinematic figure in the Spanish context, reflecting on sociohistorical events but focusing principally on the child character's experience. In analysing the filmic narratives, I tracked the changing perceptions of the family unit as a nucleus and read playful, imaginative practices as forms of resistance. Moving from *Marisol* to *Frida*, these practices became more explicitly integrated into the filmic narratives, and thus move in lockstep with concurrent advances in Childhood Studies. I detected shifts in the representation of the child orphan, taking place against a backdrop of changing political currents. These shifts run deeper than the changing politics of the dictatorship and the post dictatorship period. Rather, reflecting on the trajectory of the orphan child across these four Spanish films, we can note the persistence of the orphan figure as child protagonist, who moves through each of the cinematic narratives, re-emerging and growing in her autonomy and agency.

Filmography

- ¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* 1976 Directed by Narciso Ibáñez Serrador. American International Pictures.
- Barrio*. 1998. Directed by Fernando León de Aranoa. Spain: Sogotel.
- Bicycle Thieves*. 1948. Directed by Vittorio De Sica. Ente Nazionale Industrie Cinematografiche.
- Big*. 1988. Directed by Penny Marhsall. USA: 20th Century Fox.
- Camino*. 2008. Directed by Javier Fesser. Altafilms.
- Carlos Saura Photographer—Journey of a Book*. 2017. Directed by Jörg Adolph and Gereon Wetzel. MagnetFilm.
- Caso cerrado*. 1985. Directed by Juan Caño Arecha. Spain: Universal Pictures International.
- Con la pata quebrada*. 2013. Directed by Diego Galán. Spain: Cameo Media.
- Citizen Kane*. 1941. Directed by Orson Welles. USA: RKO Radio Pictures.
- Cría cuervos*. 1976. Directed by Carlos Saura. Spain: Emiliano Piedra.
- Deprisa, deprisa*. 1981. Directed by Carlos Saura. CB Films S.A.
- E.T.* 1982. Directed by Steven Spielberg. USA: Universal Pictures
- El calentito*. 2005. Directed by Chus Gutiérrez. Spain: Buena Vista International.
- El espíritu de la colmena*. 1973. Directed by Víctor Erice. Spain: Bocaccio Distribución.
- El laberinto del fauno*. 2006. Directed by Guillermo del Toro. Spain: Telecinco Cinema.
- El orfanato*. 2007. Directed by J. A. Bayona. Warner Bros.
- El pequeño ruiseñor* 1957. Directed by Antonio del Amo. Spain: Divisa Home Video.
- El pico*. 1983. Directed by Eloy de la Iglesia. Mercury Films.
- El poder del deseo*. 1975. Directed by Juan Antonio Bardem. Spain: Manuel Salvador.
- El sur*. 1983. Directed by Victor Erice. Spain: C.B Films.
- El viaje de Carol*. 2002. Directed by Imanol Uribe. Spain: Warner Brothers.
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- La mala educación* 2004. Directed by Pedro Almodóvar. Spain: Pathe.
- La prima Angélica* 1974. Directed by Carlos Saura. Divisa Red S.A.
- La vendedora de rosas*. 1998. Directed by Víctor Gaviria. Nirvana Films S.A.
- Las malas intenciones*. 2011. Directed by Rosario García-Montero. Play Music and Video.
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- Los olvidados* 1950. Directed by Luis Buñuel. Koch-Lorber Films.

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Pajarico. 1997. Directed by Carlos Saura. Spain: Filmart.

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Rebel Without a Cause. 1955. Directed by Nicholas Ray. USA: Warner Bros.

Secretos del corazón. 1997. Directed by Montxo Armendáriz. Aiete Films.

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This Film Is Not Yet Rated. 2006. Directed by Kirby Dick. USA: IFC Films.

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Viridiana. 1961 Directed by Luis Buñuel. France: Films Sans Frontières.

Walkabout. 1971 Directed by Nicholas Roeg. USA: 20th Century Fox.

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Appendices

Interview 1: Santiago Racaj (DOP, Summer 1993)

18th January 2020, 2020, Madrid.

Summary: This interview focused on the personal experiences and recounting of processes of creative practitioner Santiago Racaj, Director of Photography of *Estiu 1993 / Summer 1993*.

RB: Está claro que Carla quería subrayar la mirada, la perspectiva de Frida, la niña, y querría saber también ¿cómo vosotros dos habéis trabajado antes de la película?

SR: Pues, claro, hicimos un trabajo previo muy intenso. O sea, ella trabajó muchísimo antes, muchísimo, por supuesto. El guión es suyo, es un guión estupendo. Está muy trabajado, muy pensado y muy cercano a ella porque está hablando de cosas, lógicamente, de su propia experiencia personal. Normalmente se dice que un director hace su primera película sobre cosas que conoce. En este caso, no es que sean las cosas que conoce, es que son propias experiencias literales, son propias de ella. La película no es literalmente autobiográfica, lógicamente, no es así, pero muchas de las cosas en la película y lo esencial son parte de su propia infancia, una experiencia que vivió ella. Pues claro, eso ya te coloca como en un punto de partida muy claro ¿no? Entonces, ella necesitaba que fuera así de alguna manera. Y que quien trabajara con ella en la dirección de fotografía comprendiera su experiencia perfectamente. Yo enseguida lo entendí, y todo nuestro esfuerzo iba dedicado a que el espectador conectara con la manera en la que esa niña ve el mundo adulto de alrededor, la pérdida, la pérdida más fuerte que uno puede experimentar en el mundo que es la pérdida de sus padres, y que el espectador sintiera todo el rato la incompreensión, la rabia y la falta. Es decir, esa falta de comprender por qué ocurre esto. Es una niña todavía muy pequeña. Entonces todo era como un equilibrio muy sutil, porque queríamos reflejar el punto de vista; el espectador solo puede saber las cosas a la vez que las sabe ella. El espectador experimenta todas las sensaciones y sentimientos, a la vez que ella en la pantalla. Eso te obliga a rodar de una manera muy determinada. Es decir, ¿qué ve el espectador? Pues lo único que puede ver el espectador es lo que ella ve, lo que ella oye. Eso limita mucho, te obliga a ser muy riguroso, a hacer un trabajo muy muy exhaustivo, ¿desde dónde aparece la cámara? ¿cómo lo encuentras? todos los tiempos, el ritmo, eso nos obligaba a hacer más trabajo, hicimos mucho trabajo previo. Carla, por un lado, hizo el trabajo de buscar a la niña, los actores y también su trabajo conmigo del día a día. Mucho antes del rodaje, empezamos a trabajar una por una en todas las secuencias que están en el guión ¿Qué cuenta esa secuencia? ¿Cómo la podemos hacer para que la cámara ni el rodaje la cuenten sin traicionar el espíritu del mensaje? Fue muy, muy difícil. Porque no estás rodando con actores adultos, sino que estás rodando con niños que a veces van a reaccionar frente de la cámara de una manera diferente a la que tu piensas. Entonces, hicimos mucho trabajo previo, de muchas horas, muchos días, para saber exactamente como queríamos rodarlo, cómo iba a ir la cámara...la primera decisión que tomamos fue estar a la altura de sus ojos siempre. Eso no es tan fácil porque al final todo el trabajo de la cámara a una altura más baja de la natural para una persona adulta es complicado, porque todo el rato tienes que estar sujetándolo de alguna manera...y luego trabajamos mucho sobre una cosa que

llamamos en cine la planificación, es decir, dónde va a estar la cámara, el valor del plano, qué va a hacer, dónde se va a mover, todo eso. Luego, durante el rodaje (eso fue antes) y durante el rodaje también. Todo el rato, cuando teníamos un día libre, un fin de semana, o un sábado o un domingo, nos dedicábamos a planificar el trabajo que nos quedaba por hacer.

RB: Un gran esfuerzo.

SR: Fue bastante intenso. Y luego, es muy curioso, porque claro todo el rato te cuestionas ¿Qué cuenta esto que has escrito, Carla? Esta secuencia que has escrito, ¿por qué? ¿Qué quiere contar con esto? Y ella tiene una respuesta, claro. Quiero contar, transmitir, esta sensación. Al final las películas yo creo que sobre todo lo que tienen que hacer es transmitir sensaciones. Quiero transmitir esta sensación para que el espectador comprenda lo que esta persona siente en este momento. Vale, vale, pues para que el espectador comprenda eso, lo que tiene que ver es 'x' y por eso la cámara tiene que estar aquí. Si estamos aquí, no vemos lo que ella ve, o sea su perspectiva sobre ello, entonces hay que rodar a la vez el momento en el que ella lo ve. Entonces era un trabajo muy racional. No había un *story* ni un *shooting* dibujado, no había nada predeterminado, eso estaba todo hablado. Y luego pues Carla era bastante rigurosa en el sentido de que al final delante de la cámara ocurriera lo que estaba escrito en el guión. La película no está improvisada, sino que cuando las cosas no salían como estaban escritas, cortaba y retomábamos de alguna manera para reconvenirla.

RB: E intentarlo otra vez

SR: Intentar otra vez de alguna forma conseguir lo que estaba escrito en el guión, de manera casi literal, a veces.

RB: Hay un plano que me gusta mucho, en el que Frida está en la carnicería. Todos los adultos están hablando de ella alrededor de su cabeza. Esta escena especialmente transmite esta sensación de no entender, de no saber qué está pasando. ¿Quería preguntarte si vosotros hablasteis mucho de esa escena y cómo la planificasteis?

SR: Sí, claro, la escena está escrita tal cual, pero claro hay que...lo que tú has dicho es un poco la clave...o sea, toda la película está pensada así...es decir, hay un mundo adulto que está a unos metros de distancia de los ojos de ella, de Frida, y ella transita este mundo desde su altura, desde su perspectiva y desde su incompreensión, entre comillas. Y esa secuencia es clave en ese sentido porque, has dado en la clave, esa la planificamos un poco...mi trabajo fue muy, muy de planificar exactamente cómo iba a ser el trabajo de cámara para transmitir esa sensación. Entonces, claro, por ejemplo, empecé empecé con lo que ella ve, sin saber que ella lo ve. Eso es fundamental, saber algo que nosotros no podemos comprender bien, ¿qué es este conejo que salta? que en el fondo yo creo que es una imagen que todos recordamos de niños. Que hay cosas que ocurren a la altura de nuestros ojos que tienen cierta dureza, cierta incompreensibilidad, porque están ocurriendo desde una perspectiva desde la que el adulto no se da cuenta...no perciben ... que está siendo visto, por ejemplo, alguien que está cortando un conejo, con un cuchillo. Eso es una imagen que yo recuerdo también de las carnicerías de cuando era niño y me parecía como que era muy fuerte ¿no? Verlo a esa altura, a ese mismo nivel ¿no? Entonces, queda muy claro que hay como determinadas imágenes que enseguida hacen que el espectador conecte rápidamente con recuerdos de su infancia. Entonces la carnicería es uno de esos momentos clave ¿mm? Entonces está súper planificada; todo el plano con el que arranca, el siguiente plano, está construido ya directamente

sobre una planificación. El espacio para tener esa profundidad, para que los adultos estén exactamente en el sitio donde tienen que estar... es una especie de secuencia de relojería, en la que todo está justo en el sitio y en el momento....y por supuesto luego tenía un hándicap más que en el momento en el que ocurriera algo, Ana, el personaje de la pequeña, tenía que decir esa frase, la cámara tenía que ir a buscarla pero no podía anticiparse porque sí no, sabríamos que ella iba a decir algo, es decir, teníamos que sorprender y Ana, que es una niña de cuatro años, chiquitita, tenía que decir en ese momento justo esa frase...Y la verdad es que está muy bien Es una de las secuencias que a mí me gusta más de la película.

RB: A mí también

SR: Por la sensación de que refleja muy bien esos dos mundos ¿no?

RB: Sí, me ha gustado mucho. Quería preguntarte también si ¿este tipo de plano, y los fotogramas están en la peli para dar la sensación de que estamos con las niñas... estamos entendiendo más de su mundo? Por ejemplo, el otro plano que me ha gustado mucho es lo de cuando van al bosque para jugar ese...el juego muy peligroso para Ana al final, y el plano este el del hombro Si me acuerdo bien, seguimos a las niñas en el bosque, y luego vemos el bosque desde la cámara desde la perspectiva de Frida y de Ana también y me parece que estos tipos de planos son para dar más énfasis en la perspectiva de las niñas. a mí me parece que así tiene más poder, más agencia en la narrativa, aunque no entienden todo, a veces los adultos no las incluyen. todavía, tienen control de su mundo, un poquito. Querría preguntarte si ¿estás de acuerdo con esto?

SR: Sí, sí, completamente, de hecho, o sea la película yo creo que refleja bien que hay un mundo de niños ...de hecho la película está más en ese mundo más...se rodaron más cosas en ese sentido. Hay un mundo de niños en la película y ahora menos, se ha quedado reducido a una secuencia en una especie como de río, embalse, una poza de un río. Hay un mundo de niños paralelo al de los adultos, es el mundo de los juegos de los niños. Esto estaba reforzado en más secuencias, rodamos más esa, nosotros lo llamamos en español una subtrama, es decir...Hay una trama principal y luego hay otras subtramas que es su relación, con una pandilla de niños que no acaban de aceptarla o que la ven como una recién llegada. Había más rodado en ese sentido. Y entonces está muy claro que, además... que allí hay una relación con los adultos, que es de incompreensión, no de lo que hacen los adultos sino de lo que le ha ocurrido en realidad. Pero luego, en la película y el guión también hay un apartado de su relación con los niños, que tienen un mundo propio que está a la vez desarrollándose en el mismo lugar que el mundo de los adultos, pero parece como si estuvieran en otra dimensión ¿no? porque habitamos los mismos espacios, pero ellos los ven de otra manera esos mismos espacios. Y eso estaba en la película, pero al final se habría un lugar que no interesaba y se eliminó. Entonces esa secuencia del bosque tenía conexión con otros espacios, que los niños habitaban, y que hacían suyos desde su perspectiva.

RB: Esto mola

SR: Es bonito que digas esto, porque yo creo que para el espectador es interesante saber que, aunque el niño se relaciona con los adultos, el niño en sí mismo es una forma de ser ¿no? O sea que un niño no es un adulto pequeño, un niño es un estado espiritual, un estado mental único, ¿no? porque en realidad, cuando eres niño, tienes una inocencia que te coloca en una dimensión distinta a pesar de habitar el mismo mundo que los adultos. Para ti, los bosques, los ríos, los sitios de

juego, son diferentes, ¿no? y todos ves desde esa perspectiva. Entonces, cuando ella va con la niña al bosque, la cámara va a esa altura. Ese bosque, que es tan inquietante para un adulto, para el niño no lo es.

RB: Es un mundo mágico, su mundo.

SR: Exacto. Entonces hay cierta maldad en lo que ella, Frida, hace. Eso está claro. La niña no está libre de crueldad, maldad...

RB: ...por los celos.

SR: Por los celos, la rabia..., por muchas cosas, pero que esté la cámara moviéndose en el bosque posibilita que el bosque sea un espacio para ellas, que tenga cierta magia en sí mismo. Entonces eso, estaba más espacio de la película. De todas maneras, como te decía, sido un trabajo muy riguroso, desde la construcción, desde donde se cuenta la película. De hecho, la primera secuencia de la película, no sé si la recuerdas, empieza con unos niños jugando en un parque urbano en la calle de la ciudad y están jugando como un juego muy catalán, que es como... decimos catalán porque es como juegan ellos, que hay uno que cuenta uno, dos, tres; se gira y al que le pille corriendo, lo elimina ¿no? Le dije, "estás muerto". Entonces el espectador ve el juego desde la espalda a Frida. Al fondo, hay un niño que al final sabemos que es su primo, no sé qué, y no lo entendemos muy bien. A Frida no le vemos la cara, vemos al niño que es su primo y se acerca, le dice...Y así es como se construye realmente su punto de vista, porque justo cuando hay unos fuegos artificiales, vemos los fuegos artificiales y vemos a la niña que los está mirando con esa conexión justo de que esos fuegos artificiales los está viendo ella. Lo que hemos hecho es darle acceso al espectador para que experimente cómo ve el mundo que la rodea. A partir de ahí, que es la secuencia 1, ya todo se construye desde esa mirada. Nos hemos centrado en a la mirada de una niña que está mirando el mundo que le rodea con cierta incompreensión. Tú vas sumando las piezas, lo que tienes que conectar. Cada pieza responde a ese mecanismo y esas secuencias sucesivas lo que hacen es construir eso, dar la asesoría. Luego ya es relativamente fácil. Es una cuestión de ser riguroso y ser coherente y no intentar grabar nada de una manera gratuita. Pero bueno, no es fácil eso.

RB: La verdad es que me ha encantado esa escena y también como vemos todo desde su perspectiva, incluso cuando el niño le preguntó por qué no llora o algo así. Y eso me emocionó, incluso aun sin saber nada de ella, nada de la peli. Y bueno... hemos hablado ya de algunos ángulos de la cámara y algunos planos, y has hecho referencia a lo difícil que es trabajar con unas niñas así. Vi un corto sobre el proceso para crear la película y comentaba que habéis tenido unas semanas muy intensas de ensayos. Supongo que, aunque todos los planes para la película eran muy rigurosos, muy planificados, todavía se ve ese sentido de escenas un poquito improvisadas. También vi una entrevista contigo hace mucho, en que hablas de esa mezcla de la realidad y... no sé... la ficción y quería preguntarte si, como en una peli así, que está un poquito basada en la vida de Carla, ¿cómo has intentado mezclar un poco de realidad con esa magia de la que hemos hablado del mundo de los niños? ¿Hay más planos o más secuencias que para ti destacan esta mezcla que a mí me parece de realidad y magia?

SR: En realidad, la capacidad de improvisación que hay en la película es muy pequeña. Es muy poca. Sí. Ocurrió un fenómeno que luego se fue suavizando un poco. Y es que claro, cuando, bueno, por supuesto está todo muy pensado en cuanto a la manera en la que se rueda, ya que hay que tener en cuenta que, tanto aquí en

España, y como en muchos otros países, hay una normativa que fija el número de horas (aquí es por comunidades autónomas) fija el número de horas que un menor, dependiendo de su edad, puede trabajar, lógicamente. Necesitas un permiso y con niños, cuanto menos edad tienen, es más riguroso. Por ejemplo, un bebé tiene 20 minutos y el niño ya con cuatro años, pues tiene seis horas. Bueno, por ejemplo, hay un margen allí...sí. Pues claro, con estas niñas, una niña de cuatro y una niña de siete años en aquel momento, el número de horas diarias era limitado. Nosotros teníamos jornadas de rodaje muy amplias, de 11 horas, pero sabemos que con los menores solamente podíamos estar rodando 4, 5 o 6 horas a lo sumo, lo máximo que la niña de siete años podía hacer. Entonces hay un trabajo de preparación previo todos los días. Dos horas, dos horas y media, donde cada uno de los departamentos dejaba todo preparado. Al punto de que la luz estuviera colocada y todos los... todo que hiciera falta para que, si había un cambio en la iluminación, no hubiera que hacer un parón y cosas de sonido colocados, empezábamos. Todo, todo, de tal manera que nosotros estábamos como colocados en un ámbito, un espacio, para que la secuencia se desarrolle más o menos como está pensada. Eso, por un lado. Por otro lado, Carla al principio esperaba una cosa, es decir, ella tenía una idea en la cabeza de lo que tenía que suceder delante de la cámara, porque al ser una vivencia suya tan personal esperaba encontrar eso, y que transmitiera la sensación que ella recordaba o haber querido contar, o que ella sentía...

RB: La memoria.

SR: Su memoria exactamente. Es decir, es como que tus memorias se plasmen delante de una cámara. Y eso a veces no ocurre porque lógicamente es muy difícil, sobre todo al principio, hasta que las piezas van encajando. En rodaje se suele decir que los primeros días de rodaje finalmente no son buenos, suelen salir mal. En este caso, con las niñas, lógicamente, era más difícil. Al principio había cierta frustración porque no pasaban las cosas tal como yo pensaba. Eso se fue suavizando con el tiempo, y al final acabó siendo todo lo contrario. Por lo menos, al principio teníamos la idea de que todo tenía que estar muy, muy pensado. Es decir, que el nivel para la improvisación era muy muy bajo. Una vez que ya habíamos escogido y una vez que las niñas aprendieron que el juego del cine funcionaba de una determinada manera y Frida dejó, entre comillas, de utilizar la herramienta de estar delante de la cámara para llamar la atención y tomó conciencia de su responsabilidad, de hacer las cosas de una manera más fluida.... Entonces en ese momento las cosas empezaron a ir más fluidas (y no antes) pudo entrar algo de improvisación en algún momento. Cuando todo estaba preparado...Había más flexibilidad, pero en realidad el nivel de improvisación es mínimo, mínimo, mínimo. Es una película, absolutamente pensada y conducida por Carla, hacia donde tiene que ser y que guía a todo el equipo. En cuanto al mundo mágico de los niños, en realidad la película nunca ha pretendido que... nosotros como espectadores sintamos que hay un mundo... infantil, o sea que haya como una especie de... o sea que el espectador entre en el mundo infantil. El espectador, o el adulto, se cuela en ese mundo infantil y lo ve con la magia con la que la puede percibir un niño. Eso no lo pretende la película. Lo que pretende, yo creo, es que el espectador perciba que hay un mundo infantil paralelo, pero... es decir, que transcurre en paralelo al mundo de los adultos, pero que va absolutamente imbricado, y los espacios son vistos desde la perspectiva de un niño. Pero si te fijas, no hay sensación de que haya una relación de los niños de manera mágica, sino que es bastante real, bastante realista. Incluso esa secuencia en esa subtrama que te digo que se rodó en más espacios de juego. Había una secuencia en la que entraban

Frieda y una amiguita a una ermita, una iglesia en un bosque, una mirada sobre las imágenes, sobre todo con cierto temor, esos momentos son impresionantes. Esas ermitas están llenas de imágenes, cirios encendidos. En ningún momento ellas ven algo que no viera un adulto. O sea, que no sé si te respondo un poco con estas respuestas. Pero en realidad un niño podría imaginarse que una ermita con cirios es un espacio sobrenatural. Podríamos haber jugado a eso, a que las imágenes que se vean parecieran otra cosa. Ellas tienen una mirada de extrañeza sobre lo que ven, porque hay un mundo adulto que no acaban de comprender. Pero no, la película no muestra un mundo mágico porque, entre otras cosas, claro, la película necesita mostrar, entrecomillas, un mundo bastante real.

RB: Sí, sí, de sufrimiento,

SR: Sí, por desgracia...ocurren las cosas que ocurren. Y una niña ha perdido a su padre y su madre.

RB: Esto me recuerda de la escena en la que Frida está jugando sola durante la noche y escucha un debate entre Marga y Esteve sobre la situación tan peligrosa que había ocurrido con Ana en el río y tal. Esa división creo que la has hecho fenomenal porque la cámara se queda con Frida, ella está mirando hacia arriba y se ven en la ventana los padres gritando y discutiendo sobre lo que le había pasado a Anna ¿Ha sido tuya la idea de hacerlo así, o está más relacionada con el guión de Carla?

SR: Totalmente. Sí, en realidad ahí hay un trabajo de hablar muchísimo con Carla, con la directora. El guión no dice exactamente nada de donde tienes que estar porque en realidad el guión realmente sería... ese guion lo que cuenta es que hay dos adultos hablando y una conversación que está siendo escuchada por ella, pero no especifica si ella está aquí o allí, o si los adultos están aquí o aquí, o qué hacen, o que dejan de hacer. Al poner ese guión en imágenes y la puesta en escena, tienes que empezar a tomar decisiones desde un punto de vista fundamental. Existe una herramienta poderosísima en el cine que es el sonido, como sabes, además de la imagen, pues igual que existe un punto de vista generado por la cámara, el punto de vista creado por el sonido es potentísimo. El punto de vista sonoro, el punto de vista del sonido. Entonces estaba clarísimo que ella tenía que escuchar lo que decían de ella sin que los adultos fueran conscientes de que ella lo estaba viendo. Pero entonces eso te obliga a llevar a cabo una puesta en escena determinada con los adultos y la menor. Es decir, no pueden ocupar el mismo espacio. No puede haber una visión directa de los adultos sobre el niño del que están hablando y cuya intención es que no escuche, que no oiga. El niño lo puede escuchar de una manera casi accidental, pero no tan accidental como porque no haya escuchado a escondidas porque ella no espía a los adultos. En fin, eso te va colocando ya en una serie de decisiones y entonces llega el momento de ponerlo en escena y ya aparece lo que está clarísimo ¿no? que es: Si los adultos tienen esta conversación dentro de la casa y fuera es de noche, y no está bien. ¿Cómo puede oírlo? Entonces, a través de la ventana genial de la cocina, como es una ventana, y está abajo, hay una relación directa de la mirada de ella sobre ellos, pero ellos no pueden verla a ella porque está abajo. Pero ocurre en un momento dado. Lógicamente son conscientes de que les puede escuchar. Si esa comunicación continúa, si se abre una ventana y de repente...Entonces es como un sitio real. Como no podemos trocear esa conversación porque significaría que le estamos quitando la relación directa en el espacio-tiempo de lo que ella ve y oye, pues la ruedas en un plano y mueves la secuencia con la cámara en una especie de prueba de habilidad, entre comillas. Tú tienes que solucionar una serie de problemas para ser coherente.

Entonces, vas poniendo soluciones. Al final, aparece la solución a base de rigor. Cuando llevábamos dos semanas rodando ya sabíamos qué funcionaba, qué no. En todas las películas, el primer día de rodaje es malo, pero el último día suele ser muy bueno. Pero toda la película está rodada un poco así. Está rodada en un diálogo. La planificación sale de un diálogo de Carla y mío...sobre cómo hay que rodarlo para que la sensación se transmita. Algunas veces ella lo tiene más claro y otras veces no lo tiene tan claro, y yo le doy más ideas. Siempre es un diálogo, tiene que serlo, es muy bonito, es un trabajo muy bonito. La parte de mi trabajo que más me gusta es esa. Mucho más que la luz. La luz viene después. La elección de la óptica. Así que todo eso son decisiones ya más concretas para llevarlo a la práctica. Eso viene después. Pero la manera en la que se cuenta es la clave de todo y a partir de ahí...ya...

RB: ¿Era importante mantener la perspectiva de ella en cada secuencia?

SR: ...porque, además, hacer las secuencias de esa manera te obliga a tomar decisiones técnicas que a veces son más complicadas...

RB: Mas aun cuando estás trabajando con niñas.

SR: Claro, mucho más porque sabes que no hay un plan B. No puedes decir “bueno, como no me ha salido, venga pues de otra manera” porque ya tienes la película rodada con intenciones y por tanto tienes que seguir en esa misma línea. No es tan fácil. A lo mejor tú puedes pensar que rodar todo del tirón, una secuencia larga del tirón es relativamente fácil, que son actores profesionales, pero hay que incluir a los actores no profesionales, los niños, a medida que vas avanzando en la secuencia y vas llegando hasta el final. Un minuto, o dos, o lo que sea. Y sigue y sigue, cada vez que hay un problema, cualquier fallo, al final arruina todo lo demás, porque no vas a cambiar la manera de contarla. Por eso tienes que volver al punto de salida e intentarlo de nuevo. Y si no lo has conseguido, volver al punto de salida, intentarlo de nuevo. Es decir, es como... no puedes traicionar lo que ya has empezado. Entonces ese rigor es la clave ¿no? A veces es agotador. Porque es difícil. Puede ser frustrante en algunos momentos. Llega un momento en que la pequeña, la niña Ana es un... era un amor, una niña feliz. Ella estaba feliz delante de la cámara, se lo pasaba muy bien, reaccionaba como una niña ante los juegos, donde ella disfrutaba de lo que estaba haciendo. Era muy buena, es una niña buenísima y que siempre hace lo que pides. Y Frida es una niña más conflictiva, en el sentido de que... no conflictiva...sino más....

RB: ¿Tiene su propia idea?

SR: Eso es. Más avanzada. Es más mayor, reacciona de diferente manera en un juego, ya hace más cosas y empezó siendo más reacia a entrar en el juego de la película. Fue cambiando enseguida y acabó siendo una grandísima profesional. Trabaja estupendamente, se lo pasaba bien, era un motor, nos empujaba a todos los demás. Frida fue...bueno... ¿Cómo se llama la niña que...?

RB: Laia Artigas.

SR: Laia acabó siendo el número uno del equipo... realmente lo que nos costaba a nosotros era estar a su altura.

RB: ¡Qué bien!

- SR:** Sí, sí, fue muy bonito.
- RB:** ¿Y qué tal en comparación? Porque sé que has trabajado también en la película, no me acuerdo del director, pero... *Magical Girl*
- SR:** *Magical Girl*, sí.
- RB:** ¿Y qué tal la experiencia en general en comparación con las dos pelis trabajar con esas niñas muy buenas? ¿Son siempre profesionales? Claro que a veces hay que cambiar el plan. Un poquito.
- SR:** Claro, cuando hablo de profesional lo digo como una metáfora, lógicamente, porque cuando trabajas con actores no profesionales lo bueno que tienen es que no son profesionales. Yo me refiero a que acabó siendo profesional una niña de 7 a 8 años y que trabajaba como si lo fuera, con el rigor, la responsabilidad y con el sentido del orden de lo que tiene que hacer, pero no en el sentido de que sea profesional y todo lo vea de una manera profesional, sino que ya trabajaba con una fluidez, una responsabilidad.
- RB:** Naturalmente.
- SR:** A un niño no se le puede pedir ser profesional. No era la intención de Carla, ni mucho menos. Lo que hizo Carla es buscar dos niñas que se parecieran a los personajes para no tener que hacer que actuaran, para que no tuvieran que ser profesionales. Ella podía haber escogido dos niñas actrices, es decir, niñas con la experiencia delante de la cámara, con no sé cuánto. Y yo les he dicho tienes que hacer esto, esto, y esto.
- RB:** Muy *stage school*.
- SR:** Todo lo contrario, Y buscó más de mil menores, más de mil niños. Al final, consiguió dos niñas que se parecían a los personajes que ella quería. Entonces, realmente, el trabajo más o menos era que fueran como eran. Entonces, en este caso hay un trabajo muy intenso de Carla en ese sentido. Y con Lucía Collantes, la niña que hizo *Magical*, ella era la única niña dentro de un reparto de adultos y tiene una participación en la película más pequeñita, más reducida. Lucía es un amor de niña, era una niña súper entregada, obediente, muy buena. Yo creo que ella sí que tiene tal vez algo más de experiencia, había hecho algo más... y es una niña de más edad. La comunicación con ella es distinta. O sea, Lucía sí que tuvo una inmersión en un rodaje de adultos por una mecánica de rodaje de adultos, profesionales etcétera. Es decir, no hubo un mecanismo alrededor de las secuencias de Lucía que la protegiera de lo que es el mecanismo del cine, el círculo. Yo no suelo... nunca retoco entre toma y toma. Pero no sólo en *verano*, en ninguna película hago retoques entre toma y toma. Intento no retocar ni entre plan y plan, ya que es una manera de mía de trabajar. Entonces procuro molestar, entre comillas, a los actores lo mínimo, mínimo... No les hago un retoque de luz, no les cambio no sé qué... no me acerco a mirar unos cuantos. Una vez que empiezan a rodar más o menos, ya voy para adelante como lo he pensado... pues con Lucía igual, que no la molestaba en nada. Pero sí, claro, no nos ocultábamos. En *verano* intentamos pasar desapercibidos. El equipo más o menos trató de pasar lo más desapercibido posible. Y en *Magical Girl* era un rodaje convencional. Vengo de rodar una película en Bolivia hace dos meses, con dos niñas pequeñitas, también, un poquito más mayores que Laia y que Ana. Pero un poquito más. Igual, desde su punto de vista, la película boliviana ocurre en una isla. Entonces me ha recordado mucho la

manera de rodar de *Estiu*. Es una construcción parecida, como... en este caso transcurre en una isla dentro del lago Titicaca, que es curioso que es un universo, micro universo en sí mismo, como era la Garrotxa. En el caso de *Magical* es un trabajo mucho más convencional en ese sentido.

RB: Gracias. Qué más... ah vale, quería preguntarte porque vi una entrevista con Carla en *Versión Española* y dice que algunos de los planos de la peli son inspirados por unas fotos de su juventud. Tú has visto estas fotos... y ¿cómo... qué pensabas de las fotos y cómo podrían inspirar algunos planos o escenas?

SR: Claro, es una película que está anclada a la realidad, una película que transcurre en el año 93 y que rodamos en el 2014/15, puede ser, no me acuerdo bien.

RB: 15 creo.

SR: Iba a decir que han pasado, veintitantos años desde que ocurrió... Pues ya es una película de época, de otra época. De hecho, tuvimos que vigilar mucho los coches que aparecen y tal, la tecnología, todo tiene que ser del año 1993. Parece que haya que hacer una película de época, entre comillas, hay cierta tentación de que la película se parezca a las imágenes que recuerdas de esa época ¿no? Porque en nuestro imaginario, en el 93 había un tipo de imágenes de televisión de una determinada manera. Entonces hay cierta tendencia, como a hacer una imitación. Parece que en el momento en que imitas cómo se vían las cosas en esa época ya, está justificada. Esa no era nuestra idea. Nosotros no queríamos que la película pareciera que estaba hecha en 1993, pero teníamos una inspiración muy buena, que eran fotografías de la propia infancia de Carla, que tenían un color determinado o tenían una imagen y en las que se veía a Carla con esa edad, en esa época y en ese entorno con sus tíos en la Garrotxa en la casa de campo. Claro, cuando ella dice que nos inspiraron esas fotografías es que es verdad porque podría ser la referencia más cierta, más precisa, de esa niña en el año 93. Nos inspiraron en ese sentido, no es que nos inspiraran ni para la composición del cuadro. Yo vi esas fotos y a mí me hicieron comprender un poco cómo era la niña, era Carla entonces, vi la expresión de la cara, que tenía una cara muy curiosa, muy pillina, ¿no? Lo decimos en español muy viva... muy ágil

RB: Con los ojos muy brillantes y tal.

SR: Como que sabes que estaba siempre dándole vueltas a la cabeza, siempre pensando. Entonces en ese sentido son muy inspiradoras, pero no en el sentido de intentar calcar una foto para reproducirla. Eso estaba descartado, o sea, la imitación de la época por algo en concreto, eso estaba descartado. Sí que fueron inspiradoras porque era ella de niña, en ese sitio y con ese *look*, ese pelo, ese maquillaje, como se pintaba ella para jugar. Eso está calcado de una fotografía que tiene ella de esa época pintada, trajeada para jugar ese juego... Las fotos eran buenas porque su tía hizo las fotos y su tía, y creo que su tío, tenían cierta mirada narrativa sobre los momentos. Eran fotos que transmitían algo y en ese sentido estaban muy bien. Ya sabes que dentro de las fotos hay recuerdos para todo el mundo... tal vez no te acuerdas porque eras muy joven. Pero en todas familias, siempre había fotos en papel, que era como se hacen las fotos, en un carrete y las llevabas a su sitio. o un álbum, las fotos que había en ese álbum eran bastante narrativas y eso está muy bien. Hay familias que no tienen esa suerte, tienen fotos que no son narrativas. Esas fotos eran bastante buenas.

RB: También tenemos videos que mi padre hizo con una cámara y no sabía cómo rodar. Es muy gracioso. Mucha gente ha hecho comparaciones con *Cría Cuervos*, *El Sur*. Todas esas pelis muy famosas son con niñas. Quería preguntar ¿qué piensas de esto? Es... no sé... según que vosotros no intentabais hacer esto. Pero ahí hay momentos muy parecidos, como lo del maquillaje que aparece también en *Cría Cuervos* y lo del bosque y los juegos de niños.

SR: Bueno, es que, para mí, realmente si me dices que te hable de una de las películas en español que más me han marcado... *El Sur* probablemente. Erice es un director con una mirada tan fina. ¿De acuerdo? Por supuesto. También me encantó en su momento. ¿Qué ocurre? Cuando retratas la mirada de un niño sobre un mundo adulto siempre va a haber conexiones, verá cosas en común, sobre todo si es ambiente rural, como son estas películas que transcurren en un ambiente rural, siempre va a haber lugares comunes. Es como si hablamos de que una de las maestras es *El Padrino*. Tienen lugares comunes. Es decir, cada vez que entras a retratar algo que tiene características en común. La infancia en cualquier país del mundo tiene algo en común. Si transcurre en un ambiente donde hay bosques, el niño va a explorar ese bosque, claro. Yo recuerdo cuando era niño, en el pueblo de los abuelos había una arboleda, una arboleda de 100 metros por 40 metros, o sea, pequeñita. Era un bosque. Pero yo me metía ahí de niño y me parecía que era el bosque más grande del mundo y era una arboleda. Yo jugaba en ese bosque a esconderme de mi hermano en secreto. Y él me encontraba, era una arboleda de nada. Entonces, claro, cualquier... En ese sentido, hay lugares comunes. Hay encuentros con otras películas que son inevitables. Tiende a jugar, a pintarse sobre todo más si es una niña que un niño... juegos el disfraz... Pero en ningún caso fueron para nosotros referencias directas. ¿Vale? En *Estiu* no hay ningún homenaje, entre comillas, directo a ninguna de esas películas que mencionas. Sí que había una referencia para nosotros, entre comillas clara, a una película que se llama *Ponette*. No sé si la conoces, *Ponette* es una película francesa. No tengo memoria ahora mismo de quien es el director, pero es conocido y la fotografía que xxxxxx alguna de estas francesas de las grandes, de las importantes. Y en esa película sí que habla de algo muy parecido a lo que habla *Estiu* 1993. La vimos y la volvimos a ver y la visitamos varias veces para saber exactamente casi lo que no teníamos que hacer. La película está muy bien, *Ponette*, pero estaba en una línea que nos marca muy claramente que no queríamos hacerla de esa manera, pues vimos la película, vimos el cómo se hizo de un documental de 60 minutos sobre cómo se trabajó esa película y cómo se hizo. Nos dimos cuenta realmente de que teníamos que intentar rodarla de otra manera. No queríamos (queríamos) someter a las niñas a un proceso tan duro de rodaje como hicieron con la niña de *Ponette*, haciendo esa película, ¿no? Intentamos hacer todo de otra manera para no tener a las niñas horas y horas, horas y horas haciendo lo mismo hasta que... No se había hecho *Ponette* en concreto... Entonces, en ese sentido sí que teníamos la película como referencia y nos sirvió mucho para aprender como teníamos que hacer las cosas. Pero el resto son casualidades, son coincidencias. No había una inspiración directa ni en *Cría cuervos* ni en *El sur*, aunque están en nuestro imaginario, claro. Unas películas muy importantes.

RB: Pues gracias. Está muy bien saberlo porque he leído muchos artículos en los que la gente hace comparaciones... y está muy bien porque en teoría están diciendo que esta peli está al mismo nivel que no sé..., *Cría cuervos*. Yo creo que sí. Es mi película favorita y también me recuerda a *Florida Project*, ¿la has visto?. Es una película que se llama *Florida Project*. Y también se centra en...

- SR:** Sí, sí, la he visto muchísimo.
- RB:** Mis películas favoritas ahora son *Verano* y *Florida Project*.
- SR:** En *Estiu* había una parte de la película que se parecía a esa especie de pandilla, ¿no?
- RB:** Sí, sí, cuando juegan.
- SR:** Eso estaba un poquito más allá, aunque el personaje no estaba tan integrado como... como puede estar la niña de esta película en ese grupo. Había una parte así del juego de grupo, lo que solo ha quedado es la poza.
- RB:** Bueno, me queda una pregunta, creo, y se trata de la escena en la que Frida va al médico con su tía y su madre. Hay muchas puertas en la toma, y la cámara va para ver a Frida que se encuentra muy lejos de la cámara, y luego se mueve para entrar a otra parte de la habitación. Por lo que he visto, hay muchas escenas así en las que seguimos un poco a Frida y luego se les ve otra parte, como la de jardín, cuando está escuchando a sus padres que están discutiendo. Y por eso quería preguntarte si Carla y tú hablasteis de cómo hacer referencia con las secuencias al hecho de que Frida tiene que ir al doctor y lo del Sida y tal. Con esas secuencias, como, por ejemplo, al principio, cuando está andando por su casa para ver dónde está su tío y su tía, y luego va al cuarto para sentarse en la silla, para ver el cuarto muy, muy... decimos... no hay cosas porque van a ir al campo. Básicamente, quería preguntarte si habéis planificado las secuencias así para empezar a decir algo, pero como que Frida no entiende todo, las secuencias van así, muestran un poquito, pero no todo.
- SR:** Totalmente. Está muy, muy pensado. Claro, a mí que pasa cuando te llega un guion, que tú lo lees y dices... ¿conecta mucho con la manera en la que yo entiendo cómo es el cine y la narración cinematográfica? Para ti es un lujo ¿no? Yo ahí enseguida percibo si las secuencias están construidas de tal manera que apoyan exactamente el sentido completo de la película. Es como ahí tengo una especie de antena especial. Yo no leo las secuencias por separado, sino que enseguida empiezo a ponerlas en conjunto con todo el sentido de toda la película. Entonces, claro, era muy importante que rodáramos el principio de la película para que todos los espectadores se hicieran las preguntas sobre qué están viendo en realidad y no puede haber una respuesta en cada una de las secuencias iniciales porque no hay respuestas para el personaje que está viendo lo que ocurre, porque ahí es todo el rato una visión parcial. Es decir, hay un mundo adulto que se mueve alrededor de ella, que ella no controla y ella percibe que la están llevando a un lugar donde... no es el sitio donde ella está en ese momento. La van a ... no quiero decir un lugar físico, me refiero a un lugar emocional. Ella no sabe muy bien, no entiende. Ha perdido a su padre, ha perdido a su madre. Está jugando en la calle, pero en realidad, está jugando en la calle porque está ocurriendo algo en donde ella en realidad no debería de estar. Cuando aterriza en el sitio donde está su familia, donde debería estar, están ocurriendo cosas, pero ella no sabe exactamente qué sensación es, ...recogiendo cosas, desmontando, lo ve desde la distancia. Sus abuelos se despiden de ella y mira cosas, objetos de su madre sobre una cama, pero el espectador no puede hacer el *puzzle* porque ella no lo hace. Si el espectador hiciera el *puzzle*, vería todas las piezas antes que ella, y sería imposible que conectara con lo que ella siente, que es esa desorientación ¿no? Esa falta de... Entonces, claro está todo rodado de esa manera. Toda la película está rodada así, pero sobre todo al principio. Cada secuencia genera una pregunta en el espectador. ¿Por qué? Pues porque lo genera en ella. ¿Qué es esto? ¿Qué pasa? ¿Por qué me da mi abuela un rosario y se despide de mí? ¿Mi abuelo me mira y no me dice nada? ¿Qué está

pasando? ¿Qué está pasando? Resulta que la única persona a que se atreve a conseguir respuestas. Esto es una cosa que le ha pasado a Carla y por eso está así. Es con un adulto que ve el mundo desde su misma estatura, que es su tía, que tiene enanismo. Al principio hay una secuencia, no sé si te acuerdas. Ella sube de jugar... no sube. Entendemos que sube porque está abajo en la calle, mirar fuegos artificiales, y por corte está en la casa, está en la casa escuchando algo que está pasando en el salón, que no ve el espectador. Camina por un pasillo, se va a la habitación, ve las cosas de su madre sobre la cama, se sienta a mirar. Y después de todo esto, hay una secuencia en la que aparece una de sus tías, que nosotros no sabemos todavía que es su tía, que es esta persona que tiene enanismo, que tiene una conexión absolutamente directa con Frida. Y qué pasaba, le pasó a Carla de pequeña y es la única persona a la que se atreve a preguntarle cosas, hablar con ella. La única persona. Entonces vuelve a estar sola, está en la parte de atrás de un coche y se aleja, se aleja, se aleja hacia la oscuridad, mientras los niños se despiden de ella felices, jugando en la calle. Llega a un sitio que de repente es absolutamente ajeno para ella, que es una cocina donde hay cosas colgadas, escuchando una conversación.

RB: Todo extraño, sí.

SR: Y se cierra la puerta y se queda dentro de la casa. Ese principio era muy importante que fuera así. Que no hubiera habido ninguna respuesta, para que el espectador se coloque en ese nuevo lugar con la misma información, entre comillas, que tiene ella, la misma desazón, la misma sensación de desubicación. Y con el médico y con esa secuencia que mencionabas. Es una secuencia puesta en escena. Y costó un poquito hacer la puesta en escena, porque ella tenía que estar ahí. Le tenían que hacer ese análisis, tenía que estar, no podía estar delante presenciando la conversación, pero teníamos que relacionarlos, pero entonces al médico no se le ve, bueno a lo mejor se le ve un poco. Se fue... porque luego tú tienes que adaptar tu puesta en escena al lugar. Entonces, hasta que no llegas al lugar es difícil. Ese lugar es la consulta real del ambulatorio del pueblo, pero, sí... Lo bueno es que yo creo que los espacios con puertas son muy cinematográficos, pues generan espacios. Son marcos dentro del marco. Es un recurso muy utilizado en el cine, ¿no? Un cuadro dentro del cuadro, *frame* dentro de un *frame*. Y ahí estos están hechos magistralmente con un teléfono que lo hacía maestro y nosotros no hemos llegado a ese nivel, pero no lo hemos intentado ...que haya un marco dentro del marco es bonito

RB: También la escena que es marco dentro de marco es cuando Frida está debajo de la mesa, escuchando la conversación, otro ejemplo de cuando los adultos hablan de ella sin ella, y quería preguntarle, ¿cómo habéis grabado esta escena específicamente, para estar, no sé, a la vez, arriba y debajo de la mesa, ¿habéis utilizado dos cámaras?, o no sé.

SR: Yo creo que cuando quieres ser muy riguroso con el punto de vista tienes que usar una cámara si puedes, solo una, porque en el momento en el que tienes dos cámaras estás mirando dos puntos de vista, indiscutiblemente, por el mero hecho de tener dos cámaras en un *set*, ya no hay un punto de vista estricto. Es que no hay películas que tenga un punto de vista estricto en cierto sentido. *Verano 1993* tiene unos puntos de vistas cambiantes, libres, fuertes, ligeros. Pero, claro *Estiu*, tiene un punto de vista fuerte. Entonces claro, se rodea con una cámara porque es la mejor manera de que todo tenga un sentido. Y entonces esa secuencia, que era complicada porque hay muchos personajes en una mesa, se rodó de una forma

muy planificada. Hicimos primero sobre un papel, ¿no? todas las posiciones de los personajes, qué hacía cada uno y dónde tenía que estar la cámara. Se planifica mucho. Y luego hay un momento en que ella se va debajo de la mesa y es importante que vayamos con ella, si ya estaba debajo de la mesa nosotros teníamos que ir con ella. Oír lo que ella oía. Realmente, el plano de sonido suele ser tan importante como el de la imagen y la construcción del punto de vista. Entonces bueno, lo que hicimos, la cámara no baja con ella, sino que ella va para abajo, corta y estamos abajo. Luego cortamos.

RB: ¿Es difícil?

SR: No te creas, es cuestión de planificar bien, tenerlo bien pensado todo. Muchas horas, muchas horas, pensando cómo lo vamos a rodar.

RB: A mí me ha gustado mucho esa escena específicamente porque es un buen ejemplo de lo que dices de los mundos paralelos

SR: Sí, porque justo lo que estaba diciendo cuando ella está abajo es importante. Y ella no sube inmediatamente porque ella podía recoger las servilletas y subir. Realmente las coge y es consciente de que si tarda en subir lo mismo obtiene más información.

RB: Claro, y luego dice “¿qué carta?” cuando sube, ahora me acuerdo. Bueno, muchísimas gracias por hablar conmigo

Interview 1 Translation: Santiago Racaj (DOP, Summer 1993)

RB: Clearly what Carla (Simón) wanted to do was to emphasise Frida's viewpoint—her perspective, and what I wanted to know is, in what way did the two of you work together before the film?

SR: Well, exactly, the work we did beforehand was very intense. I mean, she worked a lot beforehand, of course, you know? At all levels, since this script is hers. It's a great script. It's very well made, very well thought out and very close to her because it talks about things logically from her own personal experience, so, normally you talk about how a director should make their first film about things they know about. In this case, they're not merely things that she knows about, they're her own life experiences, specific to her. The film isn't literally autobiographical. Naturally that's not the case, but many aspects of the film, and indeed the most important parts, are from her own childhood, something that she experienced. So, yes, this already puts you at a very clear starting point, doesn't it? So, she needed whoever was working with her in directing the photography to understand this fully. I understood it right away and all our efforts were concentrated on getting the viewer to connect with the way in which this girl views the adult world around her—her loss, which is the hardest loss a child can experience, becoming "alone in the world", in inverted commas, the loss of her parents, and getting the viewer to have a sense throughout the film of her lack of understanding, her anger and her inability... that inability to understand why something is happening. She a girl who is still very young. So, it was all a very subtle balance because it was tough, creating the point of view; the viewer can only be aware of things at the same time as when she becomes aware of them. You have to receive all of the feelings at the same time as when she does on screen. That means you have to film it in a certain way, which is to say, what is the viewer seeing? Well, the only thing the viewer can see is what she sees, what she hears. This is very restrictive and means you have to be very strict and it's very, very exhausting work – where's the camera? How do you tell the story? All the timings, the pace. So, it was very demanding. It was a lot of work; we did a lot of forward planning. Carla, on the one hand, with her work in searching for the little girl, the actors, and also her day-to-day work with me a long time before the filming; we started working on it, talking one by one about all of the sequences that are in the script. What's this sequence saying and how can we make it so that the camera says it without betraying the spirit or the filming? It was very, very difficult, because you're not filming with adult actors, you're filming with children, who are sometimes going to react in front of the camera in a different way to the way you think. So, we did lots of work in advance—over many hours, many days—in order to know exactly how we wanted to shoot it, how the camera was going to be, where it was going to be. The first decision we made was for it to be at the same height as her eyes at all times. This isn't so easy because at the end of the day the camera was being used at a height that's lower than it usually is. This is very complicated for an adult because you have to be holding it in a certain way. I suppose that's obvious... and then we worked a lot on something that in cinema we call planning, that is to say, where the camera is going to be, the type of shot, what it's going to do, all of that and then during filming too (that was before). All

the while, when we had a free day or a weekend or a Saturday or Sunday also, we were devoting this to planning the work that was still left to do. It was quite intense.

RB: A lot of work then.

SR: Quite intense. And then it's strange because, obviously, all the time you're asking yourself what's the story behind what you've written, Carla? Why did you write this sequence? What are you trying to convey with this? Or whatever the question may be. And she has an answer, of course. She says because I want to talk about, to convey this feeling. In the end, I'd say that most of all what films have to do is transmit feelings. I want to transmit this feeling so that the viewer understands what this person is feeling at this particular moment. Ok, so that the viewer understands this, what has to be seen is "x" and the camera has to be here. If it's here, we don't see what she sees, her viewpoint on this, so, at the same time, the point in time when we see how she does something has to be filmed. So, there was a lot of logic involved in the work. There wasn't a story or a shooting drawn up as such; nothing was predetermined – all of this was *talked about*. And then, well, Carla was quite strict in the sense that, in the end, in front of the camera, what was written in the script did take place. What I mean is, the film wasn't improvised, but rather when things didn't go as planned, it was cut and we picked it up again somehow to redirect it.

RB: ...and try it again.

SR: ...try it again somehow, to manage to do what was written in the script, almost literally sometimes.

RB: There's a shot that I like a lot, in which Frida is in the butcher's and all the adults are talking about her over her head and, well, I think this scene especially transmits this process of not understanding, not knowing, not knowing what's happening. I wanted to ask you if you discussed this scene in detail and how did you plan for it?

SR: Yes, well, the scene is written just like that, but what you said is really the key thing here. I mean the whole film has been thought out in that way that is to say there's an adult world that's only a couple of metres from Frida's eyes, and she experiences this world from her height, from her point of view and from her 'lack of understanding', in inverted commas. And, in this sense, this sequence is really important because, you're right, we did plan this. My role was very much one of planning exactly how the camerawork was going to be done in order to transmit this feeling. So, for example, starting with what she sees, without knowing that she's seeing it, which is crucial, to know something that we cannot understand very well, which is this rabbit being cut up in the background and I think it's an image we all remember from being children, that there are things that happen at eye level that have a certain strength to them, a certain incomprehensibility, because they're

happening from a point of view in which the adult doesn't notice how they can be viewed. For example, someone chopping up a rabbit with a knife. It's an image I can also remember from the butcher's when I was a child and it seemed like a strong image. Viewing it at the same height, at this level, you know? It was clear that there were certain images that suddenly make the viewer quickly make a connection with the memories of their childhood. At the butchers was one of these key moments. It was very well planned, the whole scene, the shot with which it starts, the next one. It had already been constructed directly around a plan. The space for this level of depth, so that the adults are exactly where they need to be. It's a matter of the timing sequence, where everything is in the right place and at the right time. And of course I had a further handicap, which is that when something happens, Anna, the little girl character had to say a sentence, the camera had to go to look for her, but couldn't beat her to it, because of course it wasn't possible to know that she was going to say something, that is to say, surprised, and Anna, who's four years old, very young, had to say exactly this at this moment. It was a very difficult sequence. And the truth is that it's very good. It's one of the sequences that I like the most in the film.

RB: Me too.

SR: Because of the feeling that reflects these two worlds really well, you know?

RB: Yes, I liked it a lot. Something I also wanted to ask you is whether this kind of shot, and indeed the images, were put in the film in order to convey this sense that we're there with the girls, we're understanding more about their world. For example, another shot that I really liked is the one when they're going to the forest to play. That game that ends up being dangerous for Anna, and we have this over the shoulder shot. If I remember correctly, we follow the girls into the woods, and then we see the forest via the camera from the Frida's perspective and that of Anna as well, and to me it seems as though these kinds of shots are there to provide more emphasis around the girls' perspectives. I wanted to ask you if you agree with this?

SR: Yes, yes, absolutely, I mean I think it's reflected well in the film that there is a children's world. In fact it was more than that. There was more footage about this actually. There was a world for the children in the film and now this has been exemplified in a sequence that's in something like a river, a reservoir, a pool of a river. There's a children's world that's parallel to the adult one; it's a world of children's games. This was reinforced in further sequences, and we go further into this, in what we call in Spanish a subplot. There's a primary plot and then there are other subplots, which include her relationship with a group of children who don't accept her, or who see her as someone who's only just come onto the scene. There was more footage about this. And so, it's very clear that also that she has a relationship with the adults, which is one of a lack of understanding, not of what the adults are doing, but rather what has happened to her in reality. However, in the film, and in the script as well, there's also a part of her relationship with the

children, who have their own world, which is going on at the same time as that of the adults. It seems like they had been in another dimension, you know. Because we occupy the same spaces, but they see these spaces in a different way. And that was in the film, but at the end it was removed. So, that sequence in the forest had a connection with other spaces, which were inhabited by the children, and which they made their own, from their perspective.

RB: That's really cool.

SR: It's very nice of you to say that, because I really believe that for the viewer it's interesting to know that, although the child connects with the adults, the child itself is a mode of being, isn't it? I mean, a child isn't a small adult; a child is a spiritual state, a mental state that is unique, isn't it? Because in reality when you're a child, you have an innocence that puts you in a different dimension despite living in the same world as the adults. For you, forests, rivers, play areas are different, aren't they? and you see all this from that perspective in the film. So, when she's going with the girl into the forest, the camera goes to that level. That forest, which is so worrying for an adult, isn't for a child.

RB: It's a magical world—their own world.

SR: Exactly. So, there's a certain wickedness with what she, Frida, does. That much is clear. The girl isn't free from the cruelty, the wickedness...

RB: ...the jealousy.

SR: The jealousy, the anger, lots of things. But the action of the camera moving around like this in the forest makes it possible for the forest to be a space for them that has a certain magic to it. So, this was another space within the film. In any case, as a lot of hard work went into it, from the construction, from where the film is being told. And, in the end, once you've laid this down, I think that the rest is being consistent. In fact, the first sequence in the film, I don't know if you remember, starts with some children playing in the urban park, in the streets of the city, and they're playing a very Catalan game, which is like... I say Catalan because of how they're playing it – there's one who counts "one, two, three", and whoever is caught up with when running is "out", you know what I mean? "You're dead". So, we're watching them play that game from behind Frida. At the back there's a kid, who we eventually learn is her cousin, it's not fully understood at that point. We don't see Frida's face – we see the child, her cousin, approaching her, speaking to her. And the point of view is actually constructed like this, because, just as there are fireworks, we see the fireworks and we see the girl who's looking at them with just this connection, these fireworks that she's watching, what we're doing for the viewer is giving them access, so they can experience what it's like in the world that surrounds her. From then on, which is the first sequence, everything is already

constructed from this view. We've been focussed on the viewpoint of a child who is seeing the world around her with a certain lack of understanding. You're putting the pieces together, what you have to connect. Each piece is a response to this mechanism and these sequences that continue to unfold, what they do is construct things, to set the scene. Then, it's already relatively easy. It's a question of being strict and being consistent and not to try to capture anything in an unjustified way. But, you know, that's not easy.

RB: The truth is that I really loved this scene and also since everything is seen from her perspective, even when the boy asked her why she's not crying. This moved me, even without knowing anything about her, or indeed anything about the film. We've already talked about some camera angles and some shots, and you've made reference to the difficulties of working with children in this way. I watched a short film showing the making of the film and in it they were saying that you'd had some very intense weeks of rehearsing things. I suppose that, although the planning for the film was very thorough, very well thought out, there was still this sense in a way of improvisation of the scenes. I also saw an interview with you in it a while ago, where you talk about the mix of reality and fiction and I wanted to ask you whether, with a film like this one, which is loosely based on Carla's life, how have you tried to mix a bit of reality in with this magic that we were talking about of the children's world? Are there other shots or sequences that for you highlighted this mix that to me seems like reality and magic?

SR: In reality, the possibility, the amount of improvisation in the film is very small. It's very small. There was a phenomenon that relaxed things a little. And, clearly, when, well, of course everything is very well thought through with regard to the way in which it was filmed, because you have to take into account that, both here in Spain and in many other countries, there are regulations about how many hours (here it varies by autonomous region) a minor can work, depending on their age, logically. You need a permit, and with children, the younger they are, the stricter it is. For example, a baby has 20 minutes and a child who is four years old has six hours. Well, I mean, for example, there are boundaries there. With a four-year-old girl and a six-year-old girl, at the time, the number of hours per day was limited. We had days of filming that were very long—11 hours—but we always knew that with the minors we could only be filming for four, five or six hours at the most, the most the seven-year-old girl could do. So advanced preparation work goes into every day in Two hours, two-and-a-half hours, where all the departments got everything ready. As soon as the lights were put into position and there was everything that was needed for if there was a change in the lighting, so nothing came to a standstill, and the sound stuff put into place, we began. Everything, everything, in such a way that we were positioned in an area, a space, so that the sequence could be carried out more or less as planned. That's one side of things. Afterwards, at the beginning Carla was hoping for something in particular, by which I mean she had an idea in her head of what had to happen in front of the camera, because, with it being such a personal experience of hers, she was hoping for that, and for it to transmit the feeling that she remembered or had wanted to tell, or that she had felt.

RB: Her memory.

SR: Her memory, exactly. I mean, as if your memories are embodied in front of the camera. And this doesn't always happen, because logically it's very difficult of course, especially at the beginning, because the pieces start to fit together during filming. It's often said that the first few days of filming aren't good – they're often bad. In this case, with the girls, as you can imagine, it was more difficult. At the beginning there was quite a lot of frustration because things didn't happen exactly as I thought they would. This became easier over time, and, in the end, it was quite the opposite. At the beginning there was the idea that everything had to be really, and I mean really, well thought through. The level at which improvisation could happen was very, very low, which didn't mean that sometimes, once we'd chosen how the girls learnt that the game of cinema works in a particular way, and Frida stopped, in inverted commas, using the tool of being in front of the camera to attract attention and became aware of her responsibility, to do things in a way that was more fluid. So maybe, once things became more fluid (and not before) a bit of improvisation could become a part of the proceedings at some point. When everything is ready. There's more flexibility, but, in reality, the amount of improvisation is minimal, very minimal. It's a film that's most certainly thought up by and led by Carla, to wherever it has to go, by the whole team. With regard to the children's magical world, in reality, the film's intention has never been to make us as viewers perceive the children's world, but rather the viewer enters into the children's world. The viewer, or the adult, sneaks into this children's world and sees it with the magic that a child is able to see in it. This isn't what the film is trying to do. What it's trying to do I think is to get the viewer to notice that there's a parallel children's world, but... I mean that it runs alongside the adult's world in parallel, but it's fully intertwined, and the spaces are seen from the viewpoint of a child. But if you look closely, there isn't the sense that the children have a magical relationship, there's one that's quite real, quite realistic. Even this sequence is this subplot that I was telling you about that was shot in more play areas. There was a sequence in which Frida enters, along with a friend, a shrine, a church in the woods, a viewpoint on the images, on the whole very fearful, because they're very striking. These shrines are full of imagery, lit candles. I don't know if it could be inclusive, the one that it was much easier for it to be magic. At no point do they see anything that an adult wouldn't be able to see. But in reality, a child would be able to imagine that a shrine with candles is a supernatural place. We could have played around with this a little, making the images seem like something else. They have a viewpoint of amazement about what they are seeing, because there's an adult world there that they have yet to understand fully. But, no, the film doesn't have a magic world in it because, amongst other things, the film certainly needs to show, in inverted commas, a world that is pretty real.

RB: Yes, yes, of suffering.

SR: Yes, because of misfortune, the things that happened, happened. And a girl losing her mum and dad.

RB: This reminds me of the scene where Frida is playing alone at night and she listens in on a discussion between Marga and Esteve about the really dangerous situation that had happened with Ana in the river and everything, and this division I think you've done really well, because the camera stays with Frida; she's looking up and you can see the window, and they're shouting and arguing about what happened to Ana. Was it your idea to do it like this? Or did it have more to do with Carla's script?

SR: Yes, in reality, the work involved talking it through thoroughly with Carla, with the director. The script doesn't tell you anything about exactly where you have to be, but in reality, the script tells you that there are two adults talking, a conversation that Frida is listening in to, but it doesn't specify whether she's here, or there, or if the adults are here, or there, or what they're doing. It's also about making this script into images and the staging, you have to start to make decisions from a very basic point of view. There's a very powerful tool in cinema, which is sound, as you know, in addition to the image, just like how there's a point of view created through the camera, the point of view of the image and the powerful point of view – the point of view of the sound. So, it's pretty clear that she had to listen to what they were saying about her without their knowing that she was watching them. However, this makes you do some staging with the adults and the child, by which I mean they cannot occupy the same space. There can't be a direct view from the adults to the child about whom they are talking, and it's not their intention for her to hear them. The child can hear them almost accidentally, she hasn't eavesdropped on them, because she's not spying on the adults. In the end, this starts to already put you in amongst a series of decisions and so the moment comes to put it in the scene and now something becomes clear, doesn't it? Which is: if the adults are having this conversation inside the house and this was all happening one night, how can she hear it? So, through the kitchen window, and she's below, there's a direct relationship from her viewpoint on them, but they can't see her because she's below. We can't cut this conversation up into pieces because it would mean that we'd be getting rid of the direct relationship in this space-time of which she's looking and what's she's hearing. So, it's a kind of a "testing of abilities", in inverted commas. You have to find the solution to several problems in order to be consistent. So, you go along finding solutions. In the end you come across the solution by being rigorous. When we've been filming for two weeks, we already know what's working and what isn't. In all films, the first day of filming goes badly, but the last day usually goes well. But the whole film is filmed a bit like this. It's filmed as a dialogue. The planning goes from a dialogue had by Carla and me talking about exactly how it was to be filmed so that the sense is transmitted. Sometimes she gets it completely and sometimes it's not so clear, and I give her more ideas. It's always a dialogue. It's very beautiful, it's very beautiful work. This is the part of my work that I like the most. Much more than the lighting. The lighting comes later. The choice of viewpoint. So, all of this involves decisions that are already more concrete, to put it into practice. This comes later. But the way in which it's told is the thing that's key. Also, doing the sequences like this means you have to make technical decisions that are sometimes very complicated.

RB: Even more so when you're working with children.

SR: Exactly, much more so, because you know that there's no plan B. You can't just say "well, that didn't go well, let's do it another way...", because you've already got the film shot in a way that's deliberate. You have to follow this same route. It's not that easy. You might think filming a long sequence in one go would be fairly easy, maybe with professional actors, if you have non-professional actors, or children, to the extent that you're making progress in the sequence and you're coming to the end. One minute or two minutes, or whatever it may be. And it keeps going each time, any problems, anything going wrong, ruins everything else, because you're not going to change the way it's told. Because of this, you have to go back to square one and try again from the start. And if you haven't managed to do it, go back to the drawing board and try again. It's like... you can't betray what you've started. So, this precision is key, don't you think? Sometimes it's exhausting. Because it's difficult. It can be frustrating at times. There was a point where the little girl, Anna, she was an angel, a very happy child. She was happy in front of the camera; it went really well with her. She reacted like a girl usually would with the games, where she enjoyed what she was doing. She was very good, a very good girl, and always did as she was told. And Frida was more troubled, in the sense that... I don't mean trouble, I mean more...

RB: She had her own ideas?

SR: That's exactly it. More advanced. She's older; she reacts differently in a game. She already does these things, and she starts to be more reluctant to join in in the game in the film. She was changing and she ended up being a true professional. She worked extremely well, she had a good time, she was a trooper, she kept everyone else going. Frida was... well... Why am I saying Frida? Laia Artigas ended up being number one in the team. Honestly, the only thing that we found tricky was getting down to her height.

RB: That's brilliant!

SR: Yes, it was very nice.

RB: And what was it like in comparison? Because I know you also worked on the film *Magical Girl*?

SR: Yes, yes, *Magical Girl*.

RB: What was it like in general, in comparison, the experience with the two films of working with these fantastic girls? Were they always professional? I imagine the plan had to be changed a bit sometimes.

SR: Exactly. When I speak from a professional point of view, I say it like it's a metaphor, which makes sense, because when you're working with non-professional actors, the advantage you have is just that, that they're not professionals. What I'm referring to is the fact that a seven or eight-year-old child ends up being professional and works as if they were, with the toughness, the responsibility and with a sense of the order in which things have to be done, but not in the sense that she's a professional and sees everything in a professional way, but more that she had already been working with a good flow and the right level of responsibility.

RB: Of course.

SR: It wasn't Carla's intention, not by any means. What Carla did was to look for two girls who seem like the characters, so they didn't need to be made to act, so they didn't have to be professionals. She was able to choose two child actresses, girls with experience in front of the camera. And she searched through over 1,000 children, over 1,000 children. In the end, she found two children who seemed like the characters she was looking for. So, in this case, Carla had a lot of intense work in this regard. And with Lucía Collantes, the girl who did *Magical Girl*, she was the only child in a cast of adults and hers was a much smaller, reduced involvement in the film. Lucía is a gem of a girl, she was dedicated, obedient, very good. I think she might have had some more experience; she'd done something more... and she's older. I mean Lucía was indeed immersed in the shooting of adults with all the workings of filming adults, professionals, etc. That is to say that there was no mechanism surrounding Lucía's scenes to protect her from the nature of the workings of cinema, the circle. I don't normally... I never retouch between takes. But not only in *Verano*; I don't retouch anything between takes in any film. If the lighting has been set up, I try not to retouch anything between shots, since this is one of the ways in which I work. So, I "offend" actors as little as possible. I don't do any changing of the lighting; I don't change things. I don't get up close and look at things. More or less when shooting begins, I go forwards. Well, the same with Lucía – I didn't get on her nerves at all. But, indeed, we didn't hide away. In *Verano* we tried to go by unnoticed. The most unnoticed team possible. And in *Magical Girl*, the filming was conventional. I've just come from shooting a film in Bolivia two months ago, with two girls, young girls, again, a little older than Laia and Ana. But only a little bit older. Again, from their point of view, the Bolivian film, which takes place on an island. So, it reminded me a lot of the way we filmed *Verano*. Is a similar set-up, like... in this case, it takes place on an island in Lake Titicaca, which is interesting because it's a universe, a micro universe, like Garrotxa. With *Magical Girl*, the work is much more conventional in this regard.

RB: Thank you. I wanted to ask you, because I saw an interview with Carla (Spanish version) and she says that some of the shots in the film are inspired by some photos of her childhood. Have you seen these photos, and could they be the inspiration for some shots or scenes?

SR: Exactly, when it's a film that's anchored in reality, a film that takes place in 1993 and that we shot in 2014/15, maybe, I can't remember exactly.

RB: 2015, I think.

SR: I was going to say that so many years have gone by since it happened. Well, it's a film about a different time, another age. In fact, we had to be very careful with the cars that are shown and everything like that, the technology; everything had to be as it was in 1993. It seems, with a film from a different time, in inverted commas, there's a temptation for the film to be like the images you remember from that time, isn't there? Because in 1993 we imagine there to have been a certain kind of television at the time. So, there's certainly a tendency, like creating an imitation of something. It would seem that when you imitate how things were, in this era, it's justified. This wasn't our idea. What we wanted for the film wasn't to make it seem like it had been made in 1993, but rather we had very good inspiration, which was photos from Carla's own childhood, which were a certain colour or a had an image and in the ones of Carla at that age, in this time and surroundings with her aunt and uncle in Garrotxa, in the house in the countryside. So, when she says that these photographs inspired us, it's true, because true it's the most precise viewpoint on this girl in 1993. So, in this sense, they inspired us. It's not that they even inspired us for the composition of the frame. I saw these photos and they made me understand a little bit about what she was like when she was as a child, who Carla was; I saw the expression on her face, that she had a very inquisitive, very cheeky face, very alive, very nimble.

RB: With very bright eyes.

SR: As you know, always in her head, always thinking. So, in this sense they were very inspirational, but not in the sense of trying to imitate a photograph in order to reproduce it. This possibility was ruled out, I mean, the imitation of that era by means of something specific; indeed, that was ruled out. She was an inspiration because it was her as a girl, in that location, with that look, that hair, that make-up, just like how she put on makeup to play.

RB: That scene with the make-up and everything.

SR: This idea was taken from a photograph of hers from this from this time, with her face painted, dressed up to play a game. The photos were good because her aunt took them and her aunt, her uncle, had a certain way of looking at moments like those, one that tells the story. They were photos that gave an impression and that's why they were very good. You already know, in amongst the family photos that everyone... maybe you don't remember because you'd have been very young. But

every family had photos on paper, which is how photos were done, in a roll of film and you take them to wherever. Or indeed an album. The photos in this album were quite narrative and this is a good thing because there are families who aren't that lucky; they have photos that aren't narrative. These photos are quite good.

RB: My family also have videos that my dad made with a camera, and he didn't know how to film; it's very funny. Lots of people have made comparisons with *Cría Cuervos*, *El Sur*, all the famous films with children in them, and I wanted to ask what you think about this? I don't know, given that you didn't intend to do that. But there are very similar moments there, like the one with the make-up, which also happens in *Cría Cuervos*, and the one with the forest and the children's games. I just wanted to ask you what you think about this?

SR: Well, for me, if you're talking about a Spanish-language film that has left a mark on me, indeed the one that has done that the most, what comes to mind is probably *El Sur* left an impression. Erice is a director who has a very precise way of looking at things. Do you know what I mean? Of course. When you're describing a child's view of the adult world, there are always going to be connections, you'll notice similarities, most of all if it's in a rural environment; that's what these films are like, the ones that take place in a rural environment – you're always going to get situations that are similar to ones in other films. I mean think of the big ones, *The Godfather*. It has certain places in common with other film. Childhood in any country in the world has something in common with childhood elsewhere. If it takes place in a forest environment, a child is going to explore that forest – of course they will. I remember when I was a child, where my grandparents lived there was a coppice. A coppice that was 100 by 40 metres, I mean it was really small. It was woodland. But I would go in there as a child and for me it was the biggest forest in the world and it was actually just a coppice. I played in these woods in order to hide away from my brother, and he used to find me – it was tiny really. In this sense there are common places. There are encounters with other films that are inevitable. Games, the costume... But at no point were they *direct references* for us, you understand? In *Estiu* there's no direct "homage", in inverted commas, to any of these films that you mention. There was actually a reference for us, in inverted commas, that was clear, which is a film called *Ponette*. I don't know if you know it. *Ponette* is a French film. Right now, I can't remember who the director is but they're well known and photography, one of the big French ones. And this film talks about something very similar to what *Estiu 1993* talks about. We saw it and we saw it again and we visited it several times, to know for certain, basically, what we didn't want to do. It's a very good film, *Ponette*, but there was a line that stood out to us very clearly, which caused us to not want to do it in that way, so we watched the film, we saw the making-of documentary—there's a documentary of how it's made, which was 60 minutes in length about how they worked on this film and how it was made. In the end we came to the conclusion that we wanted to do it differently. We didn't want to subject the children to such a long filming process as how they did it with the child in *Ponette*, making this film, do you know what I mean? We tried to do it in a different way, so we didn't spend hours and hours doing the same thing with the children, so much that. So, in this sense, it's a film we used as a point of reference, and it helped us a lot in learning how we had to do things. The rest

was by chance, a coincidence; it wasn't a direct inspiration, neither was *Cría cuervos* or *El Sur*, but we had them in mind, of course. A very important film.

RB: Thank you. That's good to know, because I've read a lot of articles that make comparisons... and it's good because in theory they're saying that this film is at the same level as, I don't know, *Cría cuervos*—I happen to think so. It's my favourite film. It also reminds me of... Have you seen *Florida Project*? It's a film that also focuses on...

SR: Yes, I've seen that one a lot.

RB: My favourite films at the moment are *Verano* and *Florida Project*.

SR: I like it a lot. In *Estiu* there was a bit in the film that was similar to this kind of group of friends, you know?

RB: Yes, yes, when they're playing.

SR: This was a bit later on, although the character isn't integrated enough for the girl in this film to be in the group. There was a bit like this, a group game, which was just at the pool of the river.

RB: Well, I've only got one more question I think, and it's about the scene where Frida is going to the doctor with her aunt, her mum. There are lots of doors in the shot and the camera moves to point towards Frida who is very far away from the camera, and then it moves to go into another part of the room. From what I can tell, there are lots of scenes like this where we follow Frida a little bit, and then things move somewhere else, like in the garden, when she's listening to her parents, who are arguing. And because of this, I wanted to ask you whether you and Carla talked about how to make reference with the sequences to the fact that Frida had to go to the doctor, the topic of AIDS. With these sequences, such as for example at the start when she's going home to see where her aunt and uncle are, and then she goes to her room to sit down in the chair, only to see an empty room. Basically, what I wanted to ask you is whether you'd planned the sequences in this way, but since Frida can't understand everything, the sequences happen in the way that they do – they give away a little but not everything.

SR: Exactly. Very well thought through. So, for me, what happens when a script arrives, is that you read it and you say, well, this links very well with how I understand film to be and the cinematographic narration? For you it's something luxurious, isn't it? And there and then I see whether the sequences are constructed in such a way that they fully support the entire sense of the film. What I mean is that at that point I have a special kind of antenna. I don't read the sequences separately, but rather I

immediately start to put them all together with the film's meaning as a whole. So, yes, of course, it was very important for us to shoot the start of the film in such a way that viewers asked themselves questions about what they are seeing in reality, and there can't be an answer in every single one of the initial sequences because there are no answers for the character who is experiencing what's happening, because in those situations she only had a partial view. What I mean is that there's an adult world that is moving around her, one that she can't control, and she's sees that they're taking her to a place where... that isn't the place she's in at that point in time. She's going to be... I'm not talking about a physical place; I'm referring to an emotional place. She's not really sure, she doesn't understand. She's lost her father; she's lost her mother. She's playing in the street, but in reality she's playing in the street because something is happening, a situation she shouldn't really be in. When the situation that her family's in comes about, where she should be, things are happening, but she doesn't know exactly how she's feeling. She's... gathering things, dismantling things – this is seen from a distance. Her grandparents are saying goodbye to her and she's looking at stuff, objects from her mother on a bed, but the viewer can't put the pieces together because *she* doesn't. If the viewer puts two and two together, seeing everything before she does, it's impossible to connect with what she's feeling, which is this confusion, isn't it? This lack of... So, yes, everything is shot in this way. The whole film is shot like this, but most of all at the start. Each sequence creates a question in the viewer. And why's that? Well, because it creates one in her. What's this? What's going on? Why is my grandma giving me rosary beads and saying goodbye to me? My grandad is looking at me but not saying anything? What's happening? What's happening? It means that the only person to whom she dares to look for answers—which is something that happened to Carla and that's why it's like this—is with an adult who sees the world from the same level as her —this is her aunt, who has dwarfism. At the start there's a sequence if you remember. She gets up from playing... well she doesn't get up. We assume she's getting up because she's on the ground in the street, looking at the fireworks, and it cuts to her at home. She's at home listening to something that's happening in the living room, which the viewer can't see. She walks down a corridor, she goes into the room, she sees her mother's things on the bed, she sits down to look. And after all of this, there's a sequence where there's one of her aunts—we don't know this yet but it's her aunt—who's this person who has dwarfism, who has a truly direct connection with Frida....and what happened, something that happened to Carla as a child – she's the only person whom she dares ask questions, she says, to speak to her. The only person. So, then you start to I don't know how much, when of this person, she's alone again, she's in the back of a car and she's moving away, further, and further, until it goes dark, to another place, whilst the children say goodbye to her happily, playing in the street at night. She arrives at a place that is all of a sudden completely alien to her, which is a place... it's a kitchen where there are things hung up, listening in to a conversation. And the door closes and she's in a house. It was very important for the start to be like this. For there not to be any answers, so that the viewer is put in this new place with the "same information", in inverted commas, that she has, the same uneasiness, the same feeling of disorientation. And at the doctor's, the sequence you mentioned... It's a sequence that has a deliberate *mise en scène*. And it was a little but difficult to do *mise-en-scène*, because she had to be there. They had to do some tests on her, she had to be, she couldn't be at the forefront of the conversation, but we had to link them together, but at the doctor she's seen, well perhaps she's seen a little bit. Because you then have to adapt your *mise-en-scène* to

the place. So, until you go to the place, it's difficult. That place is the actual doctor's office in the surgery in the town, but yes... The good thing is that I think that spaces with doors are very cinematographic, well they create spaces. They're frames within the frame. It's something that's used all the time in film, you know what I mean? There are directors who've mastered this, and we haven't reached that level, but we haven't tried either, so for there to be a frame within the frame is really nice.

RB: Another scene that has a frame within a frame is when Frida is under the table listening to the conversation—another example of when the adults are talking about her without her and I wanted to ask you how did you film this scene, specifically, being, I don't know, above and below the table at the same time – did you use two cameras, or I don't know?

SR: No... I think that when you want to be very strict with the point of view, you have to use one camera, if you can, *only* one, because once you have two cameras, you're seeing two points of view, indisputably: merely by having two cameras in one set there's no longer a strict point of view. There are no films that have a strict point of view in some way *Verano 1993* some points of view that are constantly changing, free, intense, light-hearted. So, everything is filmed with one camera, because it's the best way for everything to have meaning. And, so, this sequence, which was very complicated because there are lots of people at a table, was filmed in a way that was planned out a lot. We jotted it all down on a piece of paper first, you know? All the positions of the characters, what each one was doing and where the camera had to be. It was planned out a lot. And then there was a key moment when she goes already under the table, and we had to go with her. Hear what she could hear. The sound tends to be as important as the visual aspects, and the construction of the point of view. So, what we did, the camera didn't go down with her, but rather she went down; it cuts and then we're down below. Then it cuts.

RB: Was this difficult?

SR: I wouldn't say so; it's a question of planning well, having it all thought out beforehand. Many hours, many hours, thinking about how we're going to film it.

RB: I really liked this scene specifically because it's a good example of what you were saying about the parallel worlds.

SR: Yes, because what I was just saying when she's underneath it's important, and she doesn't get up immediately, because she could have picked up the serviettes and got up. In fact, she takes them and she's aware that the longer she takes to get up the more information she picks up.

RB: Exactly, and she says, “what letter?” when she gets up. Thank you very much for talking to me.

Interview 2: David Paricio Salas (SIDA STUDI) and Margarita Maragall Vidal (Creación Positiva)

23rd January 2020, Barcelona.

Summary: This interview focused on the experiences of outreach workers from SIDA STUDI and Creación Positiva in Barcelona. Staff from both organisations spoke with me about their experiences undertaking sexual health educational outreach work and support services for people living with HIV/AIDS. I considered it fundamental to situate my reading of the child orphaned by AIDS and her fictional navigation on-screen with the actual experiences of families that underwent the trauma. Creación Positiva is a feminist social welfare organisation that works to promote sexual health and sexual rights in Barcelona, Spain. They offer activities including workshops, information sessions, political lobbying, training courses, individual and group counselling, among other services. One of their areas of work is education around the HIV/AIDS epidemic. SIDA STUDI is a similar non-profit welfare entity that works primarily on education and promotion of sexual health in the area of HIV/AIDS and on raising awareness. The outreach workers run educational courses and training workshops, sex education classes for children, and offer free contraceptive items and information. They have a library with thousands of resources including books, leaflets and film dossiers on the HIV/AIDS virus. Both organisations worked closely with people with AIDS during the 1980s, 90s and beyond. The work that they do today continues to fight the stigma and prejudice that remains in present-day Spanish society. I selected these organisations as they are based in the location of the film's setting of Catalonia, and I gained an insight into how the crisis was experienced on the ground in the region.

RB: Gracias por quedar conmigo. En primer lugar, ¿cómo podemos diferenciar entre Creación Positiva y SIDA STUDI?

ITA: Somos dos entidades diferentes. Coincidimos porque compartimos local y somos buenos amigos.

DAVID: Sí en realidad es eso, somos dos organizaciones diferentes jurídicamente, cada una tiene sus estatutos y demás. Desde hace unos cuatro o cinco años, compartimos espacio físico, es decir, que en este espacio estamos las dos entidades. Cada una de nosotras tiene proyectos por su cuenta, en solitario o con otras entidades. Y aparte también tenemos proyectos conjuntos, pues porque hace muchos años que nos conocemos, que trabajamos, que nos caímos bien y que tenemos una línea bastante parecida en todo lo que tiene que ver con temas de educación sexual y, sobre todo, la mirada de los derechos sexuales. Es un poco... pero eso dará casuística... cuando tú me escribiste que Ita es la persona más experta en todo el tema de VIH pediátrico y en la década que estaba planteada la película y demás y que el hecho de compartir espacio nos permite hacer cosas así, yo me levanté y fui al otro lado. Luego hacíamos una visita, se lo pregunté, me dijo que le encantaba y así de fácil. Pero en realidad somos dos entidades. También coincidimos en Cataluña. Está la plataforma del Comité 1º de Diciembre, que es la plataforma donde están la gran mayoría de oenegés que trabajan en temas de VIH/SIDA y allí también coincidimos las dos entidades. Hemos estado en la junta directiva de esta plataforma, pero también cada una representando a las dos entidades y tenemos varios espacios de trabajo conjunto. Nos conocemos de hace mucho tiempo, esto

también. En las dos entidades estamos algunas personas que ya hace 20 años que trabajamos en esto y que empezamos juntas, así que las trayectorias vitales han ido un poco a la par de las profesionales y en este caso fue muy fácil.

RB: Y para hacer un resumen ¿en qué trabajáis día a día?

ITA: Empiezo yo. Yo en este momento en Creación Positiva tengo un trabajo como trabajadora social, *social worker*. Es una parte importante y también llevo toda la parte de espacios grupales. Todo lo que sea a nivel de grupos, que son grupos para personas con VIH. Y a partir de aquí hago esto, también hago un poco de *counselling*. No es lo principal porque hay otras compañeras, pero a veces sí hay algún momento que por lo que sea se necesita, porque una de nuestras filosofías es que, si hay una pareja o familiares o lo que sea, tengan espacios con diferentes profesionales, pues a veces tengo que entrar como tercera un juego y llevo también algunos procesos de *counselling* con algunas personas y trabajar juntos. Trabajo todo esto. En este momento, llevo uno de los grupos que tenemos. Es un grupo de apoyo emocional para personas jóvenes con VIH. Entre estas personas jóvenes, hay algunos chicos y chicas nacidos con VIH también, que ahora ya tienen sus 20, 20 y algo, 30 y algo. Y aquí también está un poco mi experiencia, que es donde David también vino a decirme porque, a pesar de que en Creación Positiva no estoy en un espacio concreto, en un programa concreto que trabaje con infancia o familias o jóvenes en su momento, en otra asociación, sí que era la trabajadora social de un programa específico para la infancia con VIH. Por esto todas las historias como las de Frida sí me son muy familiares, porque las he vivido, como trabajadora social, muy de primera mano en algunos procesos y..., entonces, ahora no... había otra asociación que se llama Fundación Lucía, que ya no existe –acaba de desaparecer – que trabajaba en el tema del sida pediátrico, decían ellas, y allí también había colaborado. Entonces esta es un poco mi experiencia, con lo que tú venías con ganas de explorar.

RB: Claro, claro, muy interesante.

ITA: Esto es más o menos lo que hago yo en Creación Positiva. En Creación Positiva, hay muchas otras cosas que se hacen porque aparte del apartado de atención, tenemos también gente que trabaja en sensibilización, en formaciones, en charlas, gente que trabaja en incidencia política, en *advocacy*. Así que tenemos un gran sinfín y nuestros temas son derechos sexuales, violencia machista y violencias sexuales.

RB: Sí. ¿podéis contar con fondos del gobierno, o no?

ITA: Trabajamos con subvenciones de varias administraciones públicas, principalmente, sí.

DAVID: Gracias. Y SIDA STUDI, un poco diferente. Sí, sí, que la verdad es que luego hay algunas cuestiones de formación, que es donde más proyectos conjuntos tenemos, pero SIDA STUDI nació como un centro de documentación y recursos pedagógicos... y de recursos pedagógicos específicos en VIH, nació en el 87 y esa es una de las dos grandes patas de la entidad. El tema del centro de documentación ha evolucionado. Ya no solo tiene material sobre VIH, sino también con temas relacionados con la salud y la educación sexual. Y por otro lado, desde el 96, que

es cuando yo me incorporé en la entidad, fue el año que se empezaron a hacer los primeros talleres o *workshops* para jóvenes con la idea de sacar la información que había en el centro y llevarla a las escuelas. Aquellos eran los talleres de la década de los 90, de vías de transmisión y prevención del VIH, talleres que se empezaban a hacer en aquel momento. Y esos talleres han evolucionado mucho, bastante o mucho o muchísimo y, en la actualidad, apostamos por un tema de educación sexual integral desde perspectiva claramente feminista y nuestro ámbito aquí pasa por un tallerista que es Teo y nuestro ámbito de intervención son niños, niñas y jóvenes. Desde hace un año y medio, estamos trabajando también con escuelas de primaria, con niños y niñas, desde los 3 años. Trabajamos con niños, niñas, jóvenes, con los referentes familiares y con los profesionales que trabajan con ellos y con ellas. Compartimos esta perspectiva en la educación sexual de los derechos sexuales. Consideramos que, desde esta mirada feminista, pues el principal riesgo en la vivencia de nuestra sexualidad es sufrir violencias machistas. Y allí es donde las dos entidades, haciendo formación de formadores, de profesionales u otros proyectos, pues hemos hecho muchas cosas conjuntas. Sería un poco la historia y yo personalmente estoy como coordinador de la entidad desde hace unos diez años o así. Y aparte también hago talleres o formaciones grupales con jóvenes, ya no porque siempre dije que cuando me alejara mucho de esa edad dejaría de hacerlo. Así que ahora trabajo con profesionales y con familias. Es lo que me toca.

RB: Pues gracias por darme un poco del contexto. En lo que se refiere a mi tesis, quería saber un poco de vuestra experiencia en los años 90, bueno, es el contexto de la película, porque... como qué sabemos después de la época de Franco y después de la Movida. España tenía una tasa muy alta de gente que padecía del virus y quería saber qué pasaba durante esos tiempos en lo que concierne al trabajo respecto a la extensión comunitaria y, o sea, yo diría en inglés *outreach work*, para educar a la gente y específicamente a los jóvenes, en lo que concierne al sida. ¿Podéis dar una imagen general de esa época en España?

DAVID: Empiezo yo. Bueno, pero luego aquí la experta y yo también queremos darte las gracias por este planteamiento porque hay muchas veces que nos encontramos con determinados relatos que dices... bueno, este relato está muy alejado de la realidad de aquel entonces. O sea, que te hayas planteado el hecho de conocer cómo trabajábamos entidades en aquel momento o qué mensajes intentábamos trasladar y cuál era la realidad, como la que refleja bastante bien la película. Y ahí sí que ya será... pues también es de agradecer.

ITA: Antes de escribir, preguntas, porque hay mucha gente que primero escribe el libro, sale el libro y dices ha salido un libro sobre el VIH y dices esto no tiene nada que ver con la realidad.

DAVID: Yo estaba trabajando en aquel entonces en tema de drogodependencias, en comunidad terapéutica. Entonces, en la década de los 80 y 90, la realidad del Estado español con la pandemia, digo del VIH, estaba muy vinculada al fenómeno de los grupos de riesgo, que se llamó en aquel momento de forma errónea. Nosotras nunca hablábamos de grupos de riesgo, sino de prácticas de riesgo, que será un mensaje principal, pero la realidad aquí en España, tal y como muy bien relatabas, después de la dictadura, transición y movida madrileña, pues aquí no sólo estuvo relacionada con la H de las personas homosexuales, o hombres gais, sino también

con todo el tema de los usuarios de drogas por vía parenteral, consumo de heroína, básicamente. Entonces, esa fue una realidad muy dura a nivel del Estado español, que prácticamente acabó con una generación, o sea, mató a una generación de gente joven. Y un poco lo que nos encontramos en aquel momento era que sí... que era como el último escalafón o el último escalón. Ya existía todo el tema de cómo se había creado socialmente la enfermedad del sida, que parecía que sólo afectaba a determinadas personas. Por lo tanto, si eras gay, tenías muchos números; pero también, si eras heroinómano. Aquí en España la figura del yonqui también estuvo muy relacionada con ese periodo de transición. Bueno, aquí se me va ya a mí cuando trabajé en aquello lo que tenía que haber sido mi tesis y... pero esa figura, de alguna manera, la figura del yonqui como delincuente fue como una válvula de escape aquí en el Estado español, que todo el mal lo traían esas personas.

RB: *A scapegoat, yeah.*

DAVID: Entonces, a nadie le importaba un carajo qué pasaba con esas personas y si esas personas vivían, si esas personas morían. Programas que habían demostrado su efectividad en Europa, como los programas de intercambios de jeringuillas, aquí tardaron diez años en implementarse. Tardaron más de 15 años en implementarse en prisiones, donde la gente se estaba infectando y se estaba muriendo directamente. Después, esa realidad muy dura que tiene que ver... esta mañana, preparando... que nos hemos encontrado un rato para leer lo que nos había servido ... y además, tiene que ver también con la realidad de muchos niños y niñas que se quedaron huérfanos porque su papá y su mamá habían muerto a causa del sida. Claro. Pero el inicio había estado en un uso problemático de la heroína, que era la sustancia que en aquel entonces corría en España, pero con una facilidad inaudita, a unos precios irrisorios, y que enganchó a una generación entera que se llevó por delante. ¿Qué hacíamos nosotras? lo que podíamos. Yo creo que sí, que había el mensaje de los derechos humanos. O sea, no estamos hablando de buenos o malos, sino que hablamos de personas. Por lo tanto, exigíamos que hubiera recursos destinados a tanto... a cualquier persona que se estuviera infectando. Pero realmente estaba golpeando muy fuerte a los hombres gays. Sí que es cierto que había entidades en España, y sobre todo en Barcelona y Madrid, y sobre todo en Barcelona, que hacían mucha presión política desde el lobby gay. Entonces, eso era algo que estaba ahí y, poco a poco, también se fue articulando un movimiento, incluso a nivel de usuarios. Cuando los programas con... programas como mantenimiento con metadona llegaron, los mismos usuarios de heroína se empezaron a agrupar y movilizar. Y ahí también pues estuvimos dando el apoyo que pudimos en ese momento, con un mensaje desde las... desde la sensibilización y la tarea que hacíamos a nivel de incidencia política o de talleres o intervenciones grupales, que era un mensaje para nosotras muy claro, pero que ni estaba ni está hoy en día tan claro que el sida es una enfermedad, que sólo hablamos de un virus y que es un virus que puede afectar a cualquier persona. Esta idea de: no importa ni quién seas ni qué hagas, a los virus sólo les importa cómo haces lo que haces, pues era un poco el mensaje que en aquel entonces... o alguna campaña del sida es cosa de todos. Es decir, que ese era un poco el mensaje que intentábamos articular en aquel momento con una realidad muy dura que... fueron los años más mortales de la pandemia. Entonces, y fueron dos colectivos muy afectados, los grupos poblacionales, brutalmente afectados, y en eso estábamos, que me encontraba yo cuando entraba a las escuelas, que esta idea perduraba y que los chavales directamente me decían, bueno, si yo no soy maricón, si yo no me chuto,

si yo no consumo heroína, no voy a pillarlo. Había quien te lo decía y había quien no te lo decía, pero sabías que ese era el punto de partida y ese era el mensaje que intentabas desmontar con lo que tenías al alcance. A veces, hacer talleres como habíamos hecho talleres de una hora o de 50 minutos, pues claro, con ese espacio de tiempo tampoco puedes cambiar la mentalidad de las personas. Y eso lo trabajábamos como entidades, como ahora, en proyectos conjuntos. Incluso creamos plataformas a nivel estatal. La Red 2002 fue una experiencia muy chula. El año 2002 en Barcelona fue un momento muy de, muy trascendental, porque se celebró la Conferencia Internacional de Sida, en Barcelona.

RB: No lo sabía.

DAVID: Y fue la primera conferencia internacional después de que los medicamentos antirretrovirales hubieran demostrado su efectividad. Era la primera conferencia internacional que daba luz a la esperanza de vida, con todos los efectos secundarios brutales que había en aquel momento, lipodistrofia, sobre todo para las mujeres. Pero bueno, la primera vez que había algo de esperanza y sobre todo, aquella esperanza se tradujo en que llegase a todo el mundo. Ahora, me ha venido la imagen, aparte de que hubo una movilización internacional desde las asociaciones para que llegara a los países en vías de desarrollo la medicación, que en aquel entonces no había ningún tipo de acceso. Pues desde esta demanda de la realidad de los consumidores en España, pues también hicimos una acción con la que inundamos de jeringuillas todo el stand del Gobierno de la Generalitat y el de España porque aún no se podían distribuir en las prisiones.

RB: Ok.

DAVID: O no en todas. Fue una imagen, bueno, herencia de ACTUP

RB: ACTUP sí.

DAVID: Muy gráfica y salió en los medios. No sé cuantísimas jeringuillas tiramos allí para que... bueno la demanda aún seguía y la gente se seguía infectando y a pesar de que los tratamientos habían empezado a mostrar que sí, una cierta efectividad. Pero era un principio.

RB: *Won*, Ok.

ITA: No tengo mucho que añadir, yo, de esta primera época, sí que me ha hecho pensar que, por ejemplo, siempre me acuerdo de la primera vez que escuché hablar del sida y VIH, estaba... era en el entorno familiar. Estaba en una casa que tenía mi abuela, a las afueras, estábamos toda la familia. Vivíamos en la misma casa en verano pasando unos días y tenía un tío que era un... hippy, diferente y trabajaba en temas de... en temas de drogas y trabajaba en comunidades terapéuticas y todo esto, entonces, aquello que a la hora del café hablabas de qué pasaba en el mundo y él habló... ha habido dos casos. Parece que hay una enfermedad que afecta a las tres haches y a los tres, no sé qué... Allí fue la primera vez que dije ¡hostia! No te sé decir cuántos años tenía, pero ya estaba mayorcito, pero bueno no tanto...la primera ¿no? Desde allí, después, cosas de la vida. Un amigo mío, muy amigo mío, que además era médico, fue diagnosticado de sida y de VIH, allí me lo enseñó todo. Yo, de hecho, en aquella época era arqueóloga. Nada que ver. Y a raíz de esto y de

empezar a ayudarlo a trabajar en la creación de asociaciones, empezar a mover y a ver que se puede ver diferente, que se puede cambiar y que nos afecta a todos, fue la primera persona que me enseñó que esto de los grupos de riesgo no es verdad. Son las prácticas que se hacen y qué tenemos que hacer con respeto a las personas con VIH. Siempre lo digo, ¿no? yo creo que, gracias a él, gracias a Jordi, yo creo que nunca en mi vida le he preguntado a alguien si tiene VIH o no... este punto de respeto, de siempre esperar a, incluso como profesional, qué quiere la persona, que quiere, no sé qué, qué hay allí detrás. No es un virus, es una persona con muchas más cosas en la vida que le están pasando. Y a raíz de aquí, estudié Trabajo Social, ya mayorcita.

DAVID: Sé que esto fue un poco como mi entrada y siempre desde aquí, desde esta mirada diferente, desde esta atención diferente y desde este cuestionamiento, de la verdad que estaba pasando, de que se estaba hablando. La epidemia del VIH hablaba de los grandes tabús y qué pasaba con estos tabús y qué habían hecho. Y una de las cosas que también me venía ahora, cuando hablabas, es que el tema de los yonquis o de la heroína fue también muy transversal, porque estaba desde la gente de La Mina y los yonquis que se veían como delincuentes; pero también llegó a los barrios desarrollados pijos, más pijos, allí también caía todo el mundo porque también jugaron con las drogas, también se vieron con otra mirada. Bueno, muchos acabaron delinquiendo también. No era de esto, pero sí que era como algo, no era solo una clase social concreta. A lo mejor, después, lo que pudieron hacer unos y otros con su adicción fue diferente, según los privilegios que tenían, pero el desgarró de que se murió una generación también fue...

ITA: ...se murió, de grupos de amigos del barrio, de familias, de niños y niñas que fueron criados por sus abuelos y abuelas, por sus tíos y tías, por los que quieras, también en el entorno más, más de burguesía catalana... También lo hubo. También ha sido toda una historia, realmente no una generación solo, en algunos barrios, es que se cargó una generación de verdad desde un extremo al otro. Si quieres decir, de izquierda a derecha, directamente.

DAVID: Sí, sí.

ITA: Y este es un poco el contexto, que es donde... lo que refleja... está muy bien reflejado en la película. De hecho, lo que pasa que... lo refleja muy bien, pero como no da mucha... no se dedica a darte información discursiva sobre lo que pasaba, a lo mejor, si no lo sabes, te lo pierdes, ¿no? Pero si lo sabes y lo miras, dices ¡qué fuerte! Y la tragedia... volví a verla para refrescar y digo ¡hostias!

RB: Hay un par de escenas en que los abuelos están hablando de Neus, la madre de Frida que murió, y dicen algo, no sé si me acuerdo bien, pero algo como “las cosas que hacía Neus con su vida”, algo así.

ITA: Neus... tu padre y tu madre hicieron cosas mal hechas.

RB: Eso, sí, exacto. ¿Y creéis que este choque cultural entre las generaciones sigue existiendo o era más cosa de los años noventa?

DAVID: Sí, y había como una acumulación de estigmas ¿no? claro, desde el estigma, en este caso del papá y la mamá, de ser usuarios de heroína, que ya era un estigma y era

una figura muy estigmatizada aquí en España, la figura del yonqui. Luego caía el estigma del... encima de estar infectados por el VIH, o sea se convertían en yonquis sidosos. Además, estas personas tenían muy pocos recursos, no tenían redes y una esperanza de vida que era menos que otros perfiles de personas que se infectaban. Pues eso, porque no tenían recursos, porque su estado de salud en el momento de infectarse ya está muy debilitado, en muchos casos, por todo el mundo de la heroína, el tener que buscarse la vida, el que no hubiera alimentación. Entonces morían jóvenes y en aquellos casos en los que tenían criaturas, también había mucha desinformación de la transmisión vertical. Por lo tanto, bebés que nacían infectados y morían papá y mamá, entonces...

ITA: Y bebés y muchas familias eran diagnosticadas a través del bebé porque también hubo la gente que en... siendo yonquis activos y activas les pilló toda la movida. Y después también hubo un grupo de gente muy importante que habían conseguido dejar las drogas que habían pasado al lado bueno, habían llegado allí al lado bueno y al cabo de unos años, *bam*, sale el VIH, todos infectados de la época en que habían sido yonquis. Y mucha de esta gente también murió. Al principio de la pandemia, no había medicación y mucha gente murió entonces. A nivel de familias, que era lo que yo después trabajé en el programa, eran familias con un sufrimiento... primero por las drogas, familia, desde madres que iban a pillar la heroína para darles a los hijos, para que no se pusieran en riesgo por estas cosas que parecen de película, pero eran reales, desde chicos y chicas que la familia repudió y no quiso volver a ver nunca más y perdieron todas las raíces y todo. Claro, era como una debacle de sufrimiento y el sida llega aquí, encima.

ITA: Y ahora, además, ya te mueres. El que no se había muerto de sobredosis, se moría ahora. Si no lo habías dejado, pues como decía David, porque tenías un estado de salud por los años de adicción *molt* complicado y era difícil poder conseguir un tratamiento, una disciplina de tratamiento, y cuidarse para la gente... que no, lo primero en su lista no estaba cuidarse y gente que sí, que a lo mejor se podía cuidar, pero no había cura. O sea, al principio la gente se moría cada semana. No tenías tiempo, ¿no?

DAVID: Sí, sí. Y en ese contexto fue también el contexto que refleja la película de aquellos bebés que nacieron con VIH, pues claro llevaban toda esta carga: el tabú y el estigma. Muchas veces las imágenes de las abuelas también son significativas, pero es que eran abuelas que habían pasado, pues eso habían pasado por todo el mundo de la heroína, de sus hijas, de sus hijos, de sus parejas. Luego todo el mundo del VIH y, ahora, les llegaba el nieto o la nieta. Claro, aquí siempre nos gusta mucho jugar a buenos y malos, culpables e inocentes, en todo esto fue realmente complicado y aquí por parte de los bebés que... A mí me tocó en relación con algunas escuelas, pero bueno, todo el estigma del VIH en la infancia. En principio parecía, cuando son bebés... no han sido malos ni viciosos, como los homosexuales o los heroinómanos, no es culpa, esa culpa judeocristiana suya. Los malos malotes fueron sus papás y sus mamás.

ITA: Como dice la abuela en la película.

DAVID: Claro. Pero realmente también el estigma les aplastaba en muchos casos porque no sabían o no se les quería decir, o no se les decía qué es lo que les pasaba. Y luego

todo el estigma, sobre todo en el medio escolar, lo que también se ha visto reflejado en la película.

RB: Sí, en los juegos...

ITA: Exacto. Sí, porque también era un momento en que no se hablaba. Nadie decía que tenía VIH... que estaba infectado por el VIH o tenía sida, o tenía no se... algo. Se daba la información con cuentagotas “y no puedes decírselo a nadie” se pensaba entonces. A los niños y las niñas no les decimos nada porque lo van a soltar. Claro, van a ir al colegio y van a decir “sabes que mi padre está enfermo de no sé qué”, entonces, y además la gente que decía se ha muerto de neumonía... un cáncer, no se daba la información real, entonces eran niños y niñas tanto... Nosotros, por ejemplo, cuando empezamos a trabajar en el programa de infancia de los niños y niñas infectados y afectados por el VIH, decíamos y ya había unos espacios de colonias para hacer actividades lúdicas juntos, porque una de las cosas que pasaban a los niños y niñas con VIH es que como tenían que tomar mucha medicación y las escuelas no sabían necesariamente sus diagnósticos, no podían ir a los campamentos a dormir dos o tres días fuera porque le tenían que decir a la profesora: tienes que darle la medicación y entonces los padres y las madres decían: no pueden ir y no iban. Pero claro, en niños y niñas que no tenían espacios de ocio y lúdicos.... Entonces se empezaron a crear colonias especiales y allí venían niños y niñas con VIH, niños y niñas con padres y madres con VIH que a lo mejor no habían estado infectados, pero que sí que lo habían vivido en su familia. Entonces allí hacíamos colonias todos unidos y las pastillas allí no eran un tabú. No era todo, entonces, y todos estos niños y niñas que fueron creciendo y que al principio, además, ni si estaban infectados se les decía nada porque se iban a morir, porque en verdad al principio, lo que te decía, que tenía muchas familias que habían sido diagnosticadas porque cuando un niño, una niña nacía, había sido infectado en la transmisión vertical, que se dice ¿no? de madre a feto. Había habido esta transmisión. Al principio no se sabía nada, pero vivían muy pocos meses porque enseguida desarrollaban el sida, la enfermedad, se morían y se empezó a detectar. Algunas madres fueron diagnosticadas a raíz de la muerte de los bebés. Entonces, claro, fue entonces los que se les detectaba a tiempo, porque ya se empezaba a hacer algunas pruebas o... o aquí tuvieron, entre comillas, buena suerte. Algunos bebés nacidos de madres yonquis, marginadas porque como eran yonquis, se les empezaban a hacer las pruebas sin pedirles nada, sin decir nada, y se detectaron y algunos de familias buenas que nadie pensaba que podrían estar allí, murieron por culpa de que no se tenía en cuenta algunas cosas, ¿no? todas las vivencias y algunas nacieron infectados. Los infectados se van a morir, no hace falta que les digamos nada. Y niños y niñas cuyos padres tenían VIH, como el caso de Frida, y que al final no... no había habido transmisión y no estaban infectados. Pero tampoco les contamos la verdad porque lo soltarán, lo dirán y pa' qué, no les vamos a hacer sufrir por eso. Pero estos niños y niñas, cuando entraron los antirretrovirales, también beneficiaron a la infancia, a los niños y niñas ya infectados para poder tener su tratamiento y también todo lo que fue, todo el esfuerzo de prevención en la transmisión vertical. Este fue antes casi de los antirretrovirales y fue muy importante cuidar, tener muy claro cuándo eran los momentos de transmisión durante el embarazo, en el parto y el... la lactancia. Se empezó a dar leche en polvo a las mujeres para que no tuvieran que amamantar, las cesáreas famosas después con los antirretrovirales. Ya, pero realmente la tasa de transmisión vertical es una también de las primeras que bajó muy rápida.

RB: Lo leí en Internet, sí, en el caso de Carla, que es directora de la peli, ella... su madre no se lo transmitió a ella. Ella pone en su libro, que el 30 por... el 50 por ciento no tenía el virus después. Pero en la peli se ve todos los *appointment* análisis.

ITA: Porque no se sabía. Porque al principio, además, lo que pasaba es que cuando un niño o una niña nacía de una madre, lo veían cuando todavía no habían visto las pruebas... de las pruebas tan apuradas, no tan precisas como las que hay ahora. Entonces lo que se hacía era un test a los niños, niñas y se medían los anticuerpos. Y cuando un bebé nace tiene todos los anticuerpos de su madre. Todavía no ha hecho su sistema inmunológico y es a los 18 meses cuando empiezan a dejar ir y crear sus propios sistemas de defensa. Entonces tenías que esperar hasta los 18 meses y si seguía siendo positivo, quería decir que había habido infección. Si no, quería decir que no había habido infección. Ahora estoy ya con los nuevos tests y se sabe enseguida, al nacer un bebé, si ha habido transmisión; y no hay tampoco toda una transfusión de antirretrovirales durante el parto y con muchas historias muy diferentes. Pero en aquel momento, nacía y tenían que esperar a los 18 meses y hacer pruebas y esperar.

ITA: Entonces lo que le pasa a ella, que era muy a los inicios, además es que, bueno, y después también en la película el médico del Hospital del Mar... Eran algunos de los especialistas en VIH pediátrico que había. Ya le había dicho no, no ha habido transmisión, pero el médico de Girona, que no sabía tanto, decía bueno, yo por si acaso, le voy a seguir haciendo más pruebas...Lo voy a volver a mirar. ...y le voy a seguir haciendo un seguimiento, a ver qué pasa. Realmente no se sabía. O sea también era un misterio todo esto. Fue evolucionando de una forma importante también. Entonces, por todo esto, contra este percal, ¿para qué le vas a decir a un niño o una niña si se va a morir? ¿Y los nacidos, las niñas, niños con VIH? Pues, algunos, como ya les pilló los antirretrovirales y todas las nuevas terapias que llegaron primero, no se les decían nada, sólo les decían “cuidado con la sangre, cuidado si te haces daño”. Esto también lo refleja muy bien la película, la fobia con la sangre y toda la movida. Se les decía mucho de esto y después cuando llegaban a los 13, 14 años y estaban vivas... en mi caso digo vivas porque todas eran chicas en aquel momento, pues iban a tener relaciones en cualquier momento... Les tendremos que decir que tienen el VIH. Empezaban a tener la regla... empezaron entonces... fue cuando se empezó a dar diagnósticos de VIH a chicos y chicas de 14, 15 años y decirles bueno, claro, todo... porque en aquella época iban al doctor cada mes y había algunos que iban cada semana. Perdían un día de colegio porque se hacían unas transfusiones de gammaglobulinas para las defensas, era como unas quimioterapias, casi, que estaban toda la mañana en el hospital de día, enganchados entonces, a la doctora Claudia y a la doctora Rosa, que eran como uno más de la familia porque la conocen de toda la vida y normalmente los doctores de VIH eran como dios para aquellas familias. ¿No? Porque era el médico de siempre. “No, lo que diga la doctora”. Si la doctora no dice, no lo decimos y la doctora no dice no sé qué. Entonces de repente les decía, es decir, a vale... entiendo toda mi vida, ¿no? No era el riñón, no era que tenía algo. Algunos les habían dicho verdades sin decir nada o menos que tu cuerpo tiene un virus que tenemos que vigilar y tenemos que cuidar, lo que esto era una media... era una parte de verdad, no una mentira. Pero a algunos se les había mentido directamente y, claro, no sabían de qué habían muerto sus padres, sus madres ni nada, y también tenían allí todo su recorrido.

Además de, bueno, esto te lo ha transmitido tu madre, que está muerta. No te puedes cagar en ella tampoco ni puedes no sé qué, pero bueno, procesos duros ahora. Algunas de ellas empiezan a ser madres ahora. Dices *wow*... no tenía que decir... pero bueno. Todas estas épocas pasamos... no me ha ido igual los cuantos años pero está un poco...

DAVID: Ese ha sido el recorrido y también que ha sido muy rápido, ¿no? La aparición de los antirretrovirales ha cambiado el escenario, pero bueno yo creo que lo que está... y lo que también compartimos desde esta visión de derechos no es como el estigma en diferentes momentos y en diferentes escenarios, pero ha golpeado el estigma en las escuelas. La idea esta de que se llegue a verbalizar si se van a morir, para que han de ir al colegio y poner en riesgo a otros niños y niñas, si total sabemos que se van a morir. Eran mensajes que se lanzaban públicamente, que los oías en medios. Y bueno, parece ser que ahora estamos volviendo un poco a este tipo de mensajes, ¿no? Por los medios en España se puede... o hay tiempo de decir cualquier cosa por muchos derechos que vulneren. Y el estigma, también, lo habíamos hablado, de en qué momento se plantea la necesidad social, para entendernos, más allá de casos puntuales de decirlo o no, solo cuando... cuando hay riesgo de que infecten a otros jóvenes, cuando entran en edad de poder tener relaciones sexuales. Entonces al final eran personas. Yo creo que se les... sufrían todos los estigmas, pero estaban al margen...

ITA: Eran las víctimas inocentes. Sí. Teóricamente se les llamaban las víctimas inocentes del VIH. Pero... pero su vida debía ser una mierda pinchada en un palo.

DAVID: Claro.

ITA: Ni inocente ni nada, porque cargaban con todos los estigmas. Cargaban con el estigma de sus padres y madres, que ya es una historia que cualquier niño puede vivir con los suyos... Por estás... por estar allí, con los de las abuelas, por estar no sé... y sobrevivir a todo esto.

DAVID: A nivel de las escuelas, por ejemplo, no hay ningún caso en el Estado español detectado por transmisión en el medio escolar entre niños y niñas. Ni uno, ni uno solo. Está el imperativo legal de que bajo ningún concepto la familia tiene ninguna obligación de informar a la escuela.

RB: Claro, claro.

DAVID: Si lo haces por cuestiones, pues... más logísticas de temas medicación, efectos secundarios, pero bajo tu voluntad. Y por supuesto, si alguien de la escuela lo sabe, no se lo puede decir al resto de las familias. O sea que este era un poco el marco. A partir de aquí, pues claro, sí que hubo pues colegios con los que trabajábamos porque se habían enterado, por lo que fuera o existía la sospecha de que había, que qué es lo que tenían que hacer. Y aquí es donde de verdad vivías el estigma que es lo que se llama la serofobia, ¿no? Hemos puesto el nombre que en aquel entonces no tenía ni nombre, ni tampoco hablábamos de estigma. Hablábamos más de discriminación... y el intento siempre de dar el mismo mensaje. Recordábamos, pues eso, escenas como con el director que es “¿qué hago con el niño o la niña que tiene VIH?” Y claro, la reflexión un poco iba en la línea de decir bueno, “¿cuántos niños, niñas hay en este colegio?” Y usted sabe que uno de ellos tiene el diagnóstico

de VIH y ni lo sabe ni lo tiene por qué saber el resto. Y luego entrabas con el profesorado. “¿Cuántos profesores y profesoras tiene? ¿Usted sabe, el estado serológico?” Y la guinda con uno que nos sacó o a mí me sacó de mis casillas. Fue: “¿usted sabe el suyo propio?, ¿si está infectado usted o no como un director del colegio?” Porque esa idea de que sólo hablamos de virus. No saben si es un niño y si es un adulto...

ITA: Es una cosa que es de los demás, no a mí.

DAVID: ...siempre poner el escenario fuera. Entonces estaban las situaciones que se vivían, teniendo la evidencia que en la primera frase que decías y tal, cual, la decías y sabías que no iba a servir de nada, que no conocemos ni un sólo caso de transmisión, por el VIH en el medio escolar.

RB: Vuestro compañero me envió un corte de una entrevista de un periódico enfrente de una escuela y se pone a hablar y decía “tu enviarías tu niño al colegio si supieras que hay un infectado en el colegio” y dicen... “no, yo no sé yo”. “Yo no”. “Yo sí.” Nadie tiene el nivel de educación sobre sida y ni el virus de hablar de esas cosas.

DAVID: Bueno, porque allí...

ITA: Y esto sigue, sigue la misma entrevista. En este momento, a la salida de un colegio...

DAVID: Tengo la de en el medio laboral en adultos. Es que no te quería mentir, si no, la voy a buscar. Pero creo que es del 2010 o algo así. De ¿cuánta gente estaría dispuesta a compartir el trabajo con una persona infectada por VIH?

RB: Claro, claro, sí.

DAVID: Y creo que era más del 50 por ciento, 30 que decían que no compartirían. Tengo aquí. Por eso, bueno... que eso perdura y en aquel momento que había aún muchísima más desinformación y una enfermedad que era muy mortal, que yo creo que eso también...

ITA: Lo que daba miedo es la muerte, no la enfermedad. Hoy en día, con el rollo crónico pues todavía, porque no que existe una medicación que... crónico, ¿no?, es lo que dice la gente. Muchos... ahora me estaba haciendo pensar que en muchos colegios, en el programa donde trabajaba yo, también hacíamos una parte de asesoramiento a profesionales de colegios. De hecho, los primeros colegios que empezaron a pedir información porque tenían el caso de un alumno, una alumna con VIH, eran... venían porque eran niños y niñas que estaban en casas de acogida o sea que... no... ¿sabes? que habían perdido el padre, la madre, eran huérfanos y huérfanas, pero no había vivido ningún familiar. Entonces dependían de la Generalitat, de la administración pública, como estaban en una casa de acogida, pero iban al cole normal y estas casas de acogida sí que daban la información.

RB: Al colegio.

ITA: Al colegio o de alguna forma. Entonces aquí fue donde los primeros que empezaron a saber y decir... porque realmente con las familias sí que trabajábamos

mucho... el punto de partida es que no hay ninguna ley que te obliga a desvelar el diagnóstico de tu hijo y tu hija y el poder, el desvelar el diagnóstico en el colegio es un derecho que tenéis. Es un derecho que tiene vuestro hijo y vuestra hija y que tenéis vosotros de poderlo decir para recibir el *care*... el cuidado más adecuado que vosotros queréis o que creáis. Y se puede decir sólo a la maestra de la clase. Exactamente. Sólo la dirección. Y entonces sí que había muchas maestras y maestros que venían a pedir. “Me han dicho que tengo un niño una niña con VIH en la clase... ¿Qué hago? ¿Qué pasa?” Entonces, allí trabajábamos mucho el miedo. El miedo del maestro, la maestra. ¿Qué pasa? Repasábamos vías de transmisión. Tenía una parte muy curiosa en este caso, porque, claro, no... sí que no habían sido denominados como grupo de riesgo, entonces era como una cosa rara porque no sabían dónde meterlo, ¿no? Y decía ¡no! Las vías de transmisión son estas.

RB: Sangre, sí.

ITA: Tienes que tener cuidado... ahí no es que vaya a ver sangre, que me da vértigo. Si no... has visto alguna vez a un niño que le meta... es que si uno se cae del columpio se hace, si uno va a otro y le meten los dedos y el otro. Todos si nos hemos hecho daño, nunca se te ocurre meterle. Después también había un poco de mito con la saliva y los juguetes, los que eran más bebés y todo esto.

DAVID: Los chupetes.

ITA: Y normalmente, cuando... con los maestros y maestras de cuando trata... hablabas desde poder dar un poco de respuesta a sus miedos y ¿qué pasaba? Normalmente daba un resultado y sabías que era un trabajo que podía servir para el futuro, ¿no? y también entrábamos en esto, decirles aprovecha este caso, que te han dado esta información y te ha permitido ver tus miedos, prejuicios, dudas... lo que sea, porque después puedes estar teniendo en la clase la mitad con VIH y no tienes porqué saberlo, no lo vas a saber, ¿no? Sí que hubo alguna gente que tuvo las ganas de hacer una ley en que sí se tuviera que decir a nivel escolar, pero esto no prosperó mucho. Pero bueno...

DAVID: No prosperó. Bueno, igual no prosperó porque avanzó la medicación.

ITA: Sí, también es verdad.

DAVID: Claro, también es un escenario muy incierto porque nadie sabía muy bien qué es lo que iba a pasar en los próximos años y estábamos un poco pues con esa incertidumbre. La información iba muy rápido a nivel de medicación y, además, la información sobre las vías de transmisión sí que estaba clara y era objetiva, o sea, se sabía exactamente como sí o como no, ¿no? Y, a veces, que comparábamos con la tuberculosis, es mucho más fácil la transmisión porque pasa por vía aérea, mucho más que el VIH, por ejemplo, a nivel escolar, ¿no? Realmente a nivel escolar pues un peque con tuberculosis no puede ir al colegio. Era un ejemplo que también poníamos mucho en aquel momento. Ponías este ejemplo, entonces, como también la tuberculosis estaba vinculada a las muertes por sida. La desinformación hacía que fuera complicado gestionar toda la información y, eso si se había infectado por la heroína directamente.

ITA: Exacto.

DAVID: Era toda una mezcla bastante explosiva.

RB: Hay una escena así en la peli, cuando hablan más arriba de la cabeza de Frida, en la carnicería. Están hablando de tuberculosis y nadie sabe... nadie sabe muy bien.

ITA: Bueno, porque... y tampoco porque no se dice... porque hay la sospecha, porque dicen hay... sí, es la que se murió de neumonía.

RB: Claro.

ITA: Qué raro ¿no? De no sé qué, aquí no estoy diciendo nada, pero nosotras sabemos de qué se murió porque esto también...

RB: Las vecinas hablando, digamos.

DAVID: Pero ni siquiera pronunciar la palabra.

ITA: No, la palabra no se pronuncia en toda la película.

DAVID: Y en ese sentido sí que valoramos que es una película con conocimiento de causa y de la realidad de aquel momento, porque era eso, el estigma era tal que era innombrable.

ITA: Sí, sólo... era el innombrable. No se decía y se decía la cosa, aquello.

RB: La cosa.

ITA: Sí, el bicho.

DAVID: El bicho. El bicho. A nivel de atención, yo en comunidad terapéutica, un año y medio que estuve, claro era prácticamente... se moría una persona cada mes de media, entonces fuera de Barcelona, en un hospital en Tarragona. Entonces, claro, no había unidades de VIH y era una planta con una habitación al fondo. La que no tenía luz no tenía ventanas, la que no tenía nada. Además, gente que venía a comunidad terapéutica, o sea, de otras partes de España, les llevábamos con el coche y las metían allí a morir. Pero no... están allí. O sea, ya sabes dónde... ya te conocían cuando entrabas. Cuando yo *plegaba* que iba a visitarlos era innombrable. No se nombraba la palabra, ni siquiera se nombraba la palabra sida, aunque fuera para insultar. O sea era ese nivel de tabú.

RB: *Wow.*

ITA: Lo que tenemos, lo que le pasó a tu madre...

RB: La cosa.

DAVID: Me acuerdo de haber ido con la sensación esa cuando ibas a hacer visitas médicas con gente que estaba en la comunidad terapéutica y alguno que no estaba infectado o no diagnosticado, pero claro, sólo por el hecho de ir a... de ir desde la comunidad terapéutica, el médico que estaba allí como tú, o sea, no le estaba inspeccionando

ni nada, lo veías que se empezaba a poner guantes y la persona decía que yo no lo tengo, que yo no tengo el bicho, ¿no? Pero bueno, el médico a todos los que vienen de la comunidad terapéutica, pues bueno, guantes, batas. Sólo faltaba la mascarilla. Era un poco este escenario.

ITA: Bueno, mascarillas a algunas personas, la experiencia. Tengo una amiga que su marido, ella tiene VIH y su marido murió... casados a los 22 años. Estaba en una planta cerrada del hospital, en unas habitaciones que habían puesto, y entraban literalmente.... sabes cómo esto de las películas cuando hay una epidemia. Como el ébola.

DAVID: Como el ébola.

ITA: Exactamente así. O sea que entren así y que la enfermera te tiraba la bandeja con la comida para no entrar en la habitación. Esto es la época de Frida... Es la época de la película.

RB: Es chocante.

ITA: Que además era... esto no era... Estás viviendo una situación difícil. Se mueren tus amigos, parientes, lo que sea. Después de qué forma, ¿no? Que, que... Nada de respeto por la dignidad del ser humano para poder morir bien. De hecho, por esto también una de las primeras... en la época en que no había tratamientos todo el mundo se moría y a lo que nos dedicábamos la gente de las asociaciones era a hacer talleres sobre morir, aprender a morir, despedirse, poder tomar decisiones y hacer cosas. Era para... también para poder dar una muerte digna a las personas porque muchos... o porque los familiares no querían verlos, se morían solos. En el mundo gay, esto también fue un gran clásico, de la gente que había sido desheredada por las familias en muchos casos.

DAVID: Bueno y estaba... exacto... todo el tema de la homofobia. Bueno, lo que ahora hemos puesto el nombre a muchas cosas de la interseccionalidad, ¿no?

RB: Sí, sí.

DAVID: ...yo no sabía... yo no sabía aquella palabra, pero la estabas viendo ¿no? Y aquí... Y aquí estaban estos fenómenos, ¿no? Fue un poco la realidad del Estado español, pues había mucha incidencia entre hombres gays y sobre todo entre consumidores de heroína. Y aquí fue muy interesante Creación Positiva, incluso antes de serlo, fuisteis vosotras quienes también empezasteis a hablar de todo el tema de la perspectiva de género en la transmisión del VIH, ¿no?, que fueron las primeras que hablaron del tema de cómo la violencia machista se entrecruzaba con las infecciones. Qué pasaba con las mujeres cuando se infectaban, porque no existían. No estaban contempladas en ninguna variable, ni en los estudios médicos ni en las nuevas pruebas ni en los nuevos protocolos. En ningún espacio se consideraban las mujeres ni a las mujeres. Luego, venían las mujeres lesbianas, que... o no tenían sexualidad o si la tenían, no se infectaban porque sólo se tocaban y se daban besitos. Entonces, también fueron las primeras en poner sobre la mesa, desde esta interseccionalidad, cuando la que era infectada era mujer, y había tenido un uso problemático de la heroína, había ejercido el trabajo sexual. O sea, esa mujer había

desaparecido. Es que no tenía ninguna visibilidad... la que le dabais vosotras desde programas concretos como el de Actúa, que luego acabó siendo Creación Positiva. En un mes celebráis las 15 jornadas.

ITA: Sí, tenemos unas jornadas en Creación Positiva que habla de la intersección, el encuentro entre el VIH y las violencias *machistas* en el sentido... machistas... en el sentido de una mujer que sufre violencia machista. Tiene... es mucho más vulnerable a la infección por VIH y una mujer que tiene VIH es mucho más vulnerable...

RB: ...a la violencia...

ITA: ...a las violencias machistas. Entonces, estas son nuestras jornadas, que hace 15 años que vamos tocando estos temas, que, si te interesa mirar cosas en nuestra página web, la mayoría de charlas están colgadas. Sí. Por si en algún momento.

RB: Gracias.

DAVID: De nuevo, esto es eso a lo que le llamamos interseccionalidades, pero que eran... cuando muchas mujeres, cuando se controla, o sea cosas ¿no? que han... Por ejemplo, tema de los efectos secundarios de los primeros tratamientos antirretrovirales. ¿Cómo no se había hecho ningún estudio en mujeres? Yo recuerdo las jornadas ¿no? de que, claro, los efectos secundarios del pelo, en la cara de muchas cosas, que ni se habían contemplado que pudieran pasar porque no se habían experimentado en el cuerpo de mujeres, muchas mujeres tomaron medicación y sólo se habían hecho los primeros estudios en hombres.

ITA: Lo único que se hacía es adaptarlo al peso... un poco.... También pasaba esto con niños y niñas. O sea, se ha dejado de hacer investigación sobre tratamientos antirretrovirales, etc. en niños y niñas, porque ya nacen muy pocos con VIH, o sea no le damos importancia y ahora tampoco es que vamos a invertir. Lo que hacemos es coger las... las investigaciones de las personas, de los hombres adultos, las adaptamos al peso y ya está. Y también... bueno....

DAVID: ...mientras aquí no sé... lo hablábamos con Montse o con María Luisa. Mientras ahora ha habido una inversión de *pharma* industria para conseguir cosas como la PrEP, tengamos la píldora para no infectarnos. Se ha dejado de investigar en tratamientos para niños, niñas que aquí no afectan, pero que a nivel mundial...

ITA: En otros países...

DAVID: ...claro, en otros países, continúan naciendo muchísimos bebés con VIH y no tienen posologías hoy en el año 2020, no hay medicación para niños, niñas. Todo son adaptaciones de la medicación que sea para adultos. Bueno, como allí no hay mercado porque no van a... pues...

RB: Sí, todo se trata de dinero, ¿no?

ITA: Es un tema de *business*.

RB: Capitalismo.

DAVID: Al final es un poco... sí. Y nadie va a comentar también qué cosas que se pusieron sobre la... cuando se empezó a controlar la transmisión vertical, ¿no?, como efectos colaterales. Y eso llegó también muchas veces por violencia machista estructural, la que a muchas mujeres se les hacía la prueba del VIH sin pedir permiso, siempre en beneficio del bebé. Como muchas mujeres se enteraron entonces que tenían VIH y sólo habían tenido relaciones con su pareja, con matrimonio, anillo y toda la historia pues...

ITA: Y también existía que... ha habido muchas mujeres que... y lo jodido es que todavía pasa ahora... mujeres que llevan años no encontrándose bien, en el circuito de salud haciendo pruebas que te debe pasar. Y yo me acuerdo una del País Vasco de Navarra que decía... yo diciendo que acababa de tener un hijo, no me recuperaba y diciéndole al médico de cabecera hazme la prueba del VIH. Esto hace mucho. Hazme la prueba del VIH. Eres una mujer normal que estás casada con un hombre normal y heterosexual, tú no puedes tener el VIH. Por entorno, por relaciones que había tenido. Decía yo lo tengo, sospechas, hazme la prueba... y al final dijo "mira, como eres una pesada, te voy a hacer la prueba, pero no te va a salir" y el médico tuvo que decirle que era el VIH. Se tuvo que comer esto y esto nos pasa ahora. El otro día llegó una mujer recién diagnosticada. Después de tres años... de estar sintiendo que pasa algo, que no funciona, el dermatólogo te manda a un sitio, el ginecólogo te manda otro, no sé qué. Pero a nadie se le había pasado por la cabeza hacerle una prueba de VIH. Bueno, sí había pasado por la cabeza, no lo contemplan porque no están los indica... porque era una mujer normal..... con una mujer normal. Dices, hombre perdona, y entonces los diagnósticos tardíos que en mujeres se dan mucho cuando entonces ya todo es más complicado también ¿no? Cuando el sistema inmunológico ya ha recibido un golpe por recuperar, no es tan fácil. Y esto sigue pasando, pero entonces era... vaya no es que las mujeres normales, si eras yonqui, es lo primero que te preguntaban ¿pero tú te has drogado? ¡No!

DAVID: Si no te habías drogado, ni es yonqui o puta...

RB: Eres "normal".

DAVID: Eres "normal".

ITA: Esta lo que tuvo que decir... ¡No! Pero mi novio era yonqui. Porque... claro, porque las relaciones heterosexuales también pueden ser.

DAVID: Claro, y cuántas de... Ellas... por parte de parejas. De hecho, recuerdo, no sé si el... iba a decir el mandato de ONUSIDA, pero no es mandato. La propuesta está en 90, 90, 90, ¿sí? El diagnóstico tardío. Yo he visto alguna diapositiva en algún congreso comparando entre hombres y mujeres. La diferencia es abismal. O sea y esto es la... esto es el patriarcado y las violencia machista a nivel estructural. Y eso está pasando ahora.

ITA: Y entre hombres homosexuales o heterosexuales también. También. De hecho, a veces, en el grupo de jóvenes.... jóvenes con todas las situaciones diferentes, yo...

...yo estoy vivo. Tuve un diagnóstico muy tardío, pero porque es muy joven, ¿no?, y se debía infectar muy.... y dice pero yo estoy vivo porque fui al médico de cabecera y me encontraba... había algo que no funcionaba como unas anginas y no sé qué, y cuando me mandó a casa con cosas y cuando me hizo...porque era desplazado de fuera, dice, me hizo las preguntas de todo y le dije que estaba bien, que voy a hacer una prueba de VIH. Y le hizo la prueba de VIH porque era gay y tuvo la suerte y lo pilló con un CD4, creo. Pero tuve la suerte porque llegó a ser...

ITA: ...llego a ser heterosexual y estoy muerto.

DAVID: Claro. ...que lo sabes, y es una discriminación. En este caso le salvó la vida, pero bueno...

ITA: Sí, pero....

DAVID: ...este es el estigma interiorizado, ¿no?

RB: Sí.

DAVID: Y el cómo se traslada, ¿no? nosotros tenemos un servicio de información de VIH telefónico. Y ahora que se ha incorporado una compañera nueva, claro, le sorprende cómo, o sea, la mayor parte de las consultas que recibimos son de infidelidades por parte de hombres. O sea, esa es la evidencia, ¿no? Tenía una relación fuera de mi pareja estable y con el tema del período ventana, que también es curioso, o sea, el mejor de los escenarios esperar seis semanas. Pero la pregunta es ¿y ahora qué hago? Digo, aquí damos información, pero... Claro, esa es la realidad, ¿no? Y a veces que te verbalizan yo no voy a utilizar preservativo con mi pareja estable. No lo he usado en los últimos 40 años, como le digo que ahora quiero utilizar condón o como le digo que no quiero tener... No te voy a decir lo que le tienes que decir o no a tu pareja, pero si no la quieres poner en riesgo...

RB: ...hay que hacerlo. Es que no he pensado en eso.

ITA: Nosotros nos pasamos el día escuchando estas cosas y entonces tener...

DAVID: Claro.

ITA: ...la súper información, pero seguramente en fin, yo no sé mucho.

RB: Bueno, esta peli, *Verano 1993*, ha sido útil porque, claro, que tenemos pelis de Almodóvar que hablan muy poquito de...

ITA: ...todo eso...

RB: de sida y tal, pero no, o sea, la realidad de una familia y una, bueno... a lo mejor lo de... había una de Almodóvar en que se va entre Barcelona y

ITA: Todo sobre mi madre. Pero la madre era una monja...que había follado con una que era un trans. Y además era Toni Cantó.

- DAVID:** Sí, sí, el Toni Cantó ya... más complejidad... muy Almodóvar.
- RB:** Sí. Pero también lo de dolor y gloria, porque había una escena en que se ve muy muy bien la interseccionalidad... lo de cuándo va para comprar droga y hay un poco de grafiti en la pared y dice: *Hashtag* yo sí te creo. Y así vemos muy claro lo de interseccionalidad en... con feminismo y discriminación de... con ser gay en la peli de Almodóvar, yo creo. Pero eso es otra cosa.
- ITA:** Esto no lo he visto.
- DAVID:** Yo sí... me gustó, me gustó mucho... Pero bueno, eso que hemos puesto, que a veces decimos que venimos del Pleistoceno, como hemos vivido cosas que ahora tienen nombres como esta interseccionalidad, que yo creo que era el interseccional, pero del estigma. Y en el caso de los bebés eso era el sida, era la heroína y era todo, todo el entorno familiar.
- ITA:** Ser huérfano, ser huérfano en España es un estigma en sí mismo, ¿no?, que te hayas quedado sin familia, sin raíces, de pequeño...
- RB:** Sí, también...
- ITA:** ...es una movida. Yo recuerdo en el colegio, antes de del VIH, yo soy mucho más vieja... es *orfe* ¿sabes? que después también hubo estigma de los padres separados. Sus padres se han separado.
- RB:** Sí, también... hay un nombre, ¿no? “Hijos no actuales”, o algo así.
- DAVID:** No lo sé. Yo recuerdo, pero... eso que se habían separado. Tenemos que ayudar a Sánchez... recuerdo el apellido. No me acuerdo ni de la cara que tenía el chaval, pero... que el profesor nos...
- ITA:** ...que eran las primeras parejas que se separaban y que...
- DAVID:** Se divorciaban.
- ITA:** Se divorciaban... un mundo normal. Era que todas las familias eran un padre y una madre, evidentemente, otras cosas.....plantear y de repente aquella familia se deshacía. Había la posibilidad de deshacer... que tenía su propio estigma. Un poco. Yo me acuerdo de que tenía un tío que no le gustaba que sus hijos fueran a jugar a casa de niños de su clase, niñas que sus padres estaban separados. Sí, y... decía, pero tío pero ¿qué te pasa?
- RB:** Pero... no tiene nada que ver con los juegos de los niños.
- ITA:** No le gustaba que tocaran este tipo de cosas diferentes, ¿no? Es algo con la diferencia, con lo no controlado, con... con los miedos.
- DAVID:** Sí, sí. Y era otra... otra interseccionalidad de estas criaturas.
- ITA:** Sí, sí, huérfanos. Porque antes también le contestó... estaba... es que me ha hecho recordar ahora que los primeros colegios que empezaban a hacer consultas, porque

todavía no se decía, eran colegios donde iban niños y niñas que estaban en casas de acogida. Y entonces, como iban al colegio, allí sí que la Generalitat sí que daba el diagnóstico, ¿no? Eran... eran... tenían la tutela y podían dar esta información. Y era más fácil de decidir en caso de niños y niñas que sólo un número, me imagino, pero fue los primeros cuando en los colegios... y después cuando venían ya padres y madres o familias, abuelas, abuelos o lo que sea, decían... y les tenías que decir no, no, no... no es una obligación, es un derecho que tenéis. Tenéis el derecho de dar la información o no darla, ¿no?

RB: Por lo menos... después de los centros de acogida, digo... digo esto de lo de tener niños en vuestros colegios con el virus, por lo menos luego los colegios se pusieron en contacto con los centros educativos, ¿no?

ITA: Bueno, o sea, no tenían más remedio porque eran los educadores de la casa de acogida. Son padres y madres. Aquí, en muchos casos... muchas casas de acogida, de tema de infancia, de niños y niñas, se intenta que vayan al colegio en el barrio y que estén fuera. No son orfanatos a la antigua donde todo lo vivían, sino que se intenta que tengan vida, que vayan al gimnasio, a la piscina, que hagan actividades. Y allí, como representantes legales, pues daban la información sobre aquel niño aquella niña. Tampoco sabían muy bien... También con casas de acogida, también empezaron, también, a ser de los primeros que consultaban, porque estos sí que no podían ni decidir. Se encontraban y ahora ¿qué hacemos? ¿Qué tenemos que hacer? ¿Cómo tenemos que cuidar? ¿Cómo tenemos que mirar esto? Las interseccionalidades con los estigmas son interesante, creo. Que sí algo...

RB: ...ser huérfano y tener padres muertos del sida y....

DAVID: Sí, sí, el circuito que no acababa porque... había en la película, bueno, va con unos tíos con una cierta proximidad, una cierta sensibilidad, pero lo habitual es que fueran con las abuelas. O que fueran al orfanato directamente o alguna casa de acogida, claro, y la abuela... yo insisto que era alguien que había pasado todo el proceso de la heroína primero, con todo lo destructivo que tiene a nivel de ámbito familiar o sea encontrarte situaciones, pues eso, de que tu hija te ha mentado, te ha robado después de haber ido, pues a pillar por ella o hacer mil cosas con toda la degradación que supone un consumo problemático de heroína, luego el sida y luego viene la nieta, ha perdido.

ITA: Es un tema interesante el de las abuelas. Porque, por ejemplo, tú te imaginas la abuela que sale en la película con su visión y con todo, y en este caso la niña va a parar con un padre y una madre más joven, pero muchos no había. Es de otro familiar, de generación intermedia, que ayudaba y se quedaban y crecían con esta abuela, con todo esto, ¿no? Y con una sobreprotección. Y al principio con una sobreprotección y con una historia de rechazo, porque eran mujeres que habían tenido ya muchas pérdidas y les decían que se podían morir también su nieto y su nieta, con lo cual también había como un cierto distanciamiento emocional, ¿no? para una pérdida nueva. Y allí ha habido situaciones muy complejas de acompañar y de...

DAVID: Yo voy a dar algunas jornadas de Fundación Lucía, que salió también el tema después de vivir todo esto. Ahora aparecen los antirretrovirales, ya no se mueren y

entonces diles también, a la abuela que espere el proceso. Ahora le tengo que explicar que tiene el VIH y cómo se lo explico desde mi vivencia del VIH, o sea, a tu madre, que era mi hija, todo lo que yo he vivido. Ahora, como se lo digo, entonces, bueno, son situaciones de mucha carga y, sobre todo, porque socialmente, pues, claro, todo esto que decíamos antes, imaginémoslo sin poder ni nombrar la palabra. Claro, esto te tiene que acabar.

ITA: Se te consume por dentro, ¿no? Y después que van creciendo. Y a la adolescencia, pues, que sí pruebas porros, ostras, que si tienes. Claro, también hay mucho miedo, ¿no?, que no vuelva a repetir. Que no me vuelva a pasar algo así entonces con una energía adolescente y ellas ya... porque algunas al principio eran abuelas relativamente jóvenes pero después... ...es como... claro, pasa mucho ...situaciones para estos niños y niñas, chicos y chicas y ahora adultos vivir la vida llena de... una vida muy concreta y muy particular, y también es muchas veces lo que hablamos en el grupo de jóvenes, como hay jóvenes que se han infectado ahora de adultos de mayores y algunos que es por nacimiento. Hablan de... las personas que tienen VIH de adultas hablan de antes y después, ¿no? Yo era una persona antes de la infección. Y los niños y niñas es siempre. No tienen antes ni después, siempre han tenido... A veces dicen cuando no lo sabía, pero de igual ya vivían, no han... y entonces aquí también tienen una perspectiva y una aportación totalmente diferente. De hecho, hubo un... pensando en Elisa, que es una ch... hizo un programa que no me acuerdo como se titulaba, que salió en informe semanal, uno de estos... no sé dónde debe estar colgado... Porque allí sale el relato de una chica que se llama Carla, que habla de su vida, su familia, de sus padres que murieron. También salió una entrevista con ella... pero que ya habla y ahora tiene treinta y algo y ella, además, es muy interesante su historia porque eran tres niñas, tres hermanas y sólo ella se infectó, que es la del medio. La mayor no y la pequeña no. La madre murió... a cargo de las abuelas. Después murió el padre. El padre murió y ellas ya eran mayores, pero ella, que era la única infectada de la familia, había hecho todo el recorrido de... con el padre al médico y ella le hizo todo el acompañamiento al padre a la muerte, todos muy jóvenes. Y allí también había otra escena, como poco... otra situación como la de... No exactamente la misma, pero...

RB: Será útil para ver.

ITA: Y eso es interesante, creo, si no recuerdo mal, porque salían imágenes de la familia.

DAVID: Lo volví a ver yo. Cuando vino Elisa... Volví a ver el... el documental.

ITA: Es interesante.

RB: Es un documental, *okey*.

ITA: Este es como uno de los casos que más reconocí yo. ...y es muchas cosas parecidas y diferentes. Pero también confirma que creo que, para mí es algo muy importante que,... Lo que pasa en la película es una vida muy concreta, es una historia y como además ella lo ha dicho, es muy concreta, pero es muy generalizada. No es un caso. Pero ella... porque uno puede decir yo me hago directora de cine y cuento mi vida y mi historia, de lo que me pasó con mi abuelo, que venía de no sé dónde y tenía

un ojo azul. Y es tu historia. Pero en este caso la historia de Frida lo que está en la película estadísticamente ha sido el caso de mucha gente. Tiene muchas cosas que son extrapolables, que vivieron todos allí y pasan todos juntos. Es todo el proceso que hace porque también vivían esto, ¿no? es de dónde vengo y lo que tengo y cómo me hago a lo nuevo, de cómo decide que son sus padres, ¿no?, que tiene otros padres nuevos, cómo hace, cómo los pone a prueba, cómo busca, que esto tiene que ver más con psicología infantil y no hay... Pero es toda una historia y esto es aquello de verlo y decir hostia yo digo ¿cuántas? Yo he visto esto en muchas familias, cada uno con su historia diferente, cada cosa. Pero hay algo que es muy común.....que refleja una generación, una época, un momento de muchas familias. Y de hecho creo que ya recibió muchas cartas y en el grupo de los jóvenes que conozco, mucha gente dice que fue muy importante ver esta película porque fue verse. Esta es mi historia contada en un sitio y es exactamente mi historia. Si no hubiera sabido que era la de ella, habría pensado que alguien está contando mi historia. Mucha gente joven, ahora adultos, que dicen esto es sobre su historia.

RB: Me parecía que sólo contó... la familia sólo contó la verdad. Sólo explicó todas las cosas del sida a Frida a los finales. O sea, cuando se sentaba a la mesa para preguntar... para preguntar a su tía ¿qué está pasando?, ¿qué le pasó a mi madre? ¿Tú te vas a morir también o no? La peli es una herramienta educativa porque... demuestra que al final encuentra su lugar con su nueva familia. Pero antes de eso, hay que explicar lo que está pasando, porque por toda la peli no entiende. Todos los adultos hablan arriba de su cabeza o a través de la ventana o se oyen algunas cosillas... y no entiende, claro, porque nadie le ha explicado qué está pasando, qué ha pasado a su madre.

ITA: Lo que es muy interesante, que esto también pasa con los niños y niñas, que se lo cuentan cuando ella pregunta, porque ella no ha preguntado todavía y esto también era uno de los grandes temas cuando trabajamos con las abuelas y todo este tema... decir ¿cuándo? cuando pregunte. Cada niño y cada niña pregunta en un momento diferente y, normalmente, te lo pregunta en el momento que menos te lo esperas. Como le pasa a ella, mientras se está forrando los libros de colegio y están en otro se... ¡qué zasca! La niña le pregunta en la cara de la... era, ¿cómo contesto? Está muy bien hecho porque es muy real. Y también trabajamos mucho de decir... te preguntará un día y aquel día no tiene que ser la única conversación sobre esto. Es algo que se va a seguir hablando toda la vida y en cada momento y en cada edad y en cada proceso vital podrá entender cosas nuevas, interiorizar cosas nuevas, dará significados nuevos y diferentes. Es un tema que te tiene que acompañar siempre y tiene que encontrar un sitio en vuestra vida. La madre... mucha gente habla de la otra mamá, la que está en el cielo o la mamá que no sé qué... tú que eres mi... esto está muy bien, pero no es por... Sí que se lo escondían, es verdad, pero también hay una parte bien tratada porque lo hacen muy bien esta madre, este padre. No en todas partes pasaba lo mismo. Lo hacen muy bien y lo hacen cuando la niña pregunta, porque si... Si tú le das información antes de que te pregunte... Pero sí que refleja muy bien, es que está escuchando cosas y ella escucha y ve, pero todavía no sabe preguntar. Y ella está allí y lo que te dice la película es... parece que no, pero me entero de todo, y sé de todo lo que estáis hablando y de todo lo que está pasando. Y cuando me llega mi momento...

RB: ...voy a preguntar.

- ITA:** Lo expreso y cuando me siento segura, ya me siento parte de la familia. Es la escena final... Y me estoy riendo, ahora puedo llorar... y entonces llora.
- RB:** Entonces refleja muy bien el proceso, digamos, correcto para...
- ITA:** El proceso psicológico y de acompañamiento es el per... ideal. Este sí que no creo que se pudiera dar... en las familias y ella también, creo que yo le he escuchado a ella hablar, en alguna entrevista, que junta en un verano toda una cosa que duró mucho tiempo, porque decía yo en el primer verano no les llame papá o mamá, o sea, en la película tengo que ponerlo de alguna forma y lo que queda bien claro es que decide hacerlo, ¿no? Pero... Sí no... y en este sentido aquí lo... también lo defenderé un poco... un poco, no era tan fácil dar esta información porque como decíamos antes, porque en aquel momento no teníamos la información que tenemos ahora y tenías que hacer una apuesta, era la apuesta que hicimos nosotros en nuestra formación y en nuestro empezar desde vamos a hablar de, de... del cómo, del qué, vamos a romper los grupos de riesgo, vamos a hablar. Esto es una cosa que a todos nos puede pasar a todo el mundo: cómo tratamos, dónde están nuestros miedos, dónde discriminamos. No era tan fácil encontrar esto, pero también en la humanidad, a veces tenemos cosas buenas y en momentos de crisis, hay gente que hace barbaridades, como en la película, pero hay gente que sabe estar, ¿no? Esto también es importante.
- RB:** Es verdad. Pues gracias. Una pregunta final, digamos, la última pregunta: ¿crees que algunos estigmas siguen existiendo? Pero os quería preguntar si con todo el trabajo que hacéis y no sé qué pasa con los colegios, si hacen clases sobre salud sexual hoy en día. ¿Pero las cosas han cambiado y ahora, hoy en día los jóvenes entienden más sobre el sida o no?
- ITA:** Yo te contaré una cosa que... como nosotros en ningún sitio, tampoco digo que... yo he conocido a un chico que se ha infectado por VIH ahora y su padre murió de sida. Para mí con hacerlo fue paf... y decía "yo sabía todo sobre el sida en mi familia, porque mi padre murió, porque me lo contaron".
- DAVID:** Y se ha infectado...
- ITA:** Y no porque sea un tonto, porque no quisiera ver, porque sea alguien... porque no es tan fácil.
- DAVID:** Claro, yo, si quisieras un titular provocativo, diría que para los jóvenes y las jóvenes el sida no existe, ya, a fecha de hoy no existe, o sea, no lo contemplan en su vivencia de la sexualidad.
- DAVID:** ¿Vale? ¿Qué pasa con las infecciones o qué pasa cuando todo el mundo se lleva las manos a la cabeza? Porque en la actualidad no conseguimos bajar el número de infecciones entre hombres gays, bisexuales, otros hombres que tienen sexo con hombres, no se consigue bajar eso. Bueno, nuestra respuesta ahí es que lo que seguramente hace falta es una educación sexual, pero en mayúsculas, una educación sexual feminista que tenga en cuenta que hay una estructura violenta y que hay unas relaciones de privilegios opresión y que es educación sexual en la actualidad, aquí, a nivel de colegios. Claro, siempre hablamos de colegios, pero porque es el único espacio en todas nuestras vidas que realmente es universal. O sea, existe la

obligación de ir a la escuela desde los 6 hasta los 16 años. Entonces nuestra apuesta es aprovechemos el espacio. La educación sexual en los colegios está en manos de la voluntariedad de personas concretas que están en los colegios, que deciden apostar, que deciden llamar cuando les, o sea, la diputación ofrece unas charlas. Pues mira, voy a coger la de sexualidad, ¿vale?, o si no me ha gustado mucho, voy a buscar a alguien más o nos gusta a nosotros, que, por ejemplo, tenemos un planteamiento de trabajar seis horas con los grupos, en vez de 50 minutos, separando chicos y chicas en algunas sesiones, trabajando con las familias, trabajando con los profesores. Pero esos son lo que decimos profesores, profesoras motivadas, que están en algunas escuelas.

ITA: Y que no se encuentran con asociaciones de padres y madres que se lo ponen difícil.

DAVID: Exacto.

RB: Sí, como lo que está pasando con Vox...

ITA: ...los colegios más hippies y de eso de tradición más abierta. No sé qué.

DAVID: A eso me refería.

ITA: Pero ahora, con toda la extrema derecha...

DAVID: ...que estamos volviendo a mensajes o esto del pin parenteral, ¿no?

RB: Pin parental, en los periódicos.

DAVID: Claro, que no se tiene en cuenta muchas veces. Pues claro, cuando estamos hablando de que el VIH no disminuye entre hombres gays, bisexuales. Claro, donde está ahí el tema de educación sexual en mayúsculas. Cuando se les ha hablado de diversidad sexual se les ha reconocido cómo han vivido su homosexualidad, cómo se vive la homosexualidad, las primeras relaciones, los espacios de intercambio. Allí es donde creemos que hay que entrar, ya que las personas puedan tomar decisiones responsables. Que sigue el estigma, yo creo que esa es otra evidencia también. O sea por mucho que no contemplen el sida en la variable de cosas que les pueden pasar, porque el sida es historia y además el sida ya no mata, y eso es una evidencia. Pero bueno, las personas que se infectan, la buena noticia es que no se van a morir, pero son personas que en muchos contextos, y esto lo seguís trabajando... No puedes decir públicamente... Yo, mi hermano, que no tiene nada que ver con todo este mundo, dice claro, porque tú vives en tu mundo y en tu burbuja, pero en el mundo real él es geólogo, trabaja en una empresa que va por todo el mundo, y dice aquí hay cosas que no se pueden decir. Incluso no puedes decir alegremente si soy gay o si no soy gay, mucho menos si tengo VIH o no tengo VIH, dependiendo en qué contexto. Pero qué bueno esta normalización que muchas veces pretendemos decir que ya está, que ya está conseguida, no es así. Y aquí para nosotras el gran problema es este.

RB: Esa falta de...

- DAVID:** Esa falta de educación sexual, pero no de educación sexual entendida como prevención de VIH. No.
- ITA:** Como esto no tienes que hacerlo. Esto no sé, qué sino de espacios donde se pueda hablar y pueda reflexionar y puedas sentir y puedas hablar sobre experiencias de gay, cómo es mi sexualidad, no la sexualidad, la mía. Yo lo veo pues en mis sobrinos. No sé que, que puedas hablar, que puedas plantear dudas, que puedas cuestionar cosas, bueno, es que necesitamos hablar sobre sexualidad todavía. En el resto de la sociedad esto no está.
- RB:** Todavía nos queda mucho para mejorar la situación. Yo solía trabajar en *youth club*, un club juvenil, después del colegio y, como voluntaria, e intentamos hacerlo, luego, el Gobierno hacía recortes de todos los *youth clubs* y así no tenemos ese método de educar a los jóvenes que sí se puede hablar de sexo, se puede hablar de las drogas.
- DAVID:** Bueno, y también es esto. O sea qué es lo que se está invirtiendo, o cuando tú hablas a nivel gubernamental. ¿Cuál es la inversión en prevención? E inversión en prevención son los condones que compras al año. Acaba siendo algo ridículo. Esta estrategia no me salió antes del 90, 90, 90. También dejó la prevención fuera. ¿O sea, cuál es el objetivo de toda esta estrategia? Que las personas VIH... estamos mirando por su salud o lo que queremos es tenerlas controladas y que no infecten a más personas, sólo nos preocupan por eso. ¿O sea, qué es lo que nos preocupa aquí como sociedad? Desde esta idea 90, 90, 90, los gobiernos privilegiados blancos, caucásicos, estamos allí. O sea, estamos buscando a las personas con VIH intentándolas detectar.
- ITA:** Qué no se nos escape ninguno...
- DAVID:** ...que no se nos escape... sin entender por qué las mujeres están infradiagnosticadas, porque no se quiere poner esta mirada feminista o mirada feminista a la realidad. Y bueno, pues para nosotros estamos allí, ¿no? con un mundo irreal, desde una epidemiología muy aséptica y con una realidad que continúa siendo aplastante y no tenemos la misma libertad para vivir nuestras sexualidades en este sistema patriarcal heterocentrado.
- RB:** Claro.
- DAVID:** Si eres mujer, que sí soy hombre y si eres hetero, eres gay. Y todos esos son factores de vulnerabilidad que se van acumulando.
- RB:** Claro. Y si no tenemos espacios como hemos dicho de educación...
- ITA:** Porque además son factores y puntos de vulnerabilidad. Cuando decimos esto, pasa hablando, en fines de navidad, con la gente, que cuando hablas de puntos de vulnerabilidad, la gente se piensa que vienen con algo que es algo de fuera, que no puedes hacer nada, ¿no? Esta pobre persona tiene este punto de vulnerabilidad. Los creamos nosotros como sociedad. No es puntos... Hacemos los puntos de vulnerabilidad...
- DAVID:** Sí. ...no nace con ellos, sí.

ITA: No es, mira el pobre este ha nacido con una...no va de esto. No es, esta tiene... mira detectados, es que es más vulnerable, digo, ¿qué estamos haciendo nosotros para que...?

RB: para que no sea así.

DAVID: ¿Cómo construimos...?

ITA: ¿Cómo construimos y cómo participamos y a qué jugamos? Porque es una cosa que tiene que ver con todo el mundo, ¿no?

RB: Construimos este concepto de *other*, el otro, que no sabemos.

ITA: Y así nos protege.

RB: Muchísimas gracias por hablar conmigo. He aprendido un montón y había muchas cosas que no sabía antes y, por eso, he venido para aprender cosas.

ITA: Y si necesitas algo tienes nuestros correos.

DAVID: Claro.

RB: Gracias.

DAVID: ¿Sabes cómo contactar? Y lo decíamos esta mañana, que no sé... hay otra gente, no es que o nos falte el trabajo. Pero consideramos que es de agradecer también cuando alguien quiere...hablar de este tema. El reconocer pues la experiencia, sea nuestra o de quien sea, pero de personas que hemos estado allí que hemos tenido esa vivencia. También es de agradecer. No todo el mundo lo hace...

RB: Me alegro.

DAVID: Así que mucha suerte. Cualquier cosa, sabes dónde estamos. Con Víctor También sabes cómo contactar. Y ahora le voy a decir...a despedirle. Lo de los documentos de TV.

ITA: Sí, documentos de TV .

DAVID: Es que hace poco me lo pasó a mí porque vino la autora... Ok. ...y tuvimos una entrevista. Y qué más te iba a decir... y sí y pedirte que si quieres, si quieres, pero cuando viene gente que está haciendo investigaciones o estudios, claro, está la posibilidad de que luego lo envíes al centro de documentación. Ok.

ITA: ...tu estudio.

DAVID: Bueno, tu tesis es muy interesante...

- RB:** Es muy largo.
- DAVID:** ...sobre todo el capítulo este.
- RB:** A lo mejor, tengo un artículo que a lo mejor saldrá con una revista académica inglesa. Esto es, a lo mejor será más útil para la bibli, pero seguimos en contacto y si tengo cosas...
- DAVID:** Bueno, que siempre lo ofrecemos... Y también nos gusta porque hay mucha investigación. Por ejemplo, vienen muchos alumnos de instituto con el trabajo de final de grado.
- DAVID:** ...pues empieza a haber un volumen importante de trabajos que igual tienen el nivel académico que tienen. Están hechos desde un instituto. Pero bueno, también es una mirada muy interesante la de un joven en la actualidad que habla de algo. Pues eso, cuando vienen quien, bueno, habían oído hablar del sida, pero bueno, y que es interesante, esa es la función también del centro, ¿no? Como asociación nos podemos permitir indexar lo que nos la da gana y estas cosas parecen muy interesantes. Además, vinculado porque que... por política de adquisición recogemos sólo documentación, o bien que esté escrita en español o las lenguas oficiales o que hable sobre España. Claro, el capítulo está muy vinculado a la película. Además, ha sido una película que ha tenido impacto aquí en España y a nivel comercial, no dentro de nuestros submundos...
- DAVID:** Sí, en festivales... que ha vuelto a poner el tema, se llama... he oído una alguna charla.
- ITA:** Me suena, que ella... una entrevista que le decían ay, sí, te vas para... creo que sí... hostia... Algo así o estoy mezclado con otra cosa, pero no...
- RB:** No, lo buscaré.
- ITA:** pero no ha tenido... Además, sí, porque ha sido muy interesante, porque ha sacado el tema del VIH, pero desde... desde el triunfo como película... cinematográfico, ¿no?, como un documental o alguien activista qué estoy diciendo...sino que ha llegado por arriba, ¿no? Decir una película o una buena película...
- DAVID:** El triunfo comercial...
- ITA:** ...algo no sé qué con... con unas...que ha tenido éxito, que ha tenido resultado, que ha sido vista, y habla de VIH. Entonces fue cuando ella también empezó a contar qué era su historia.
- DAVID:** De hecho, como anécdota, pero bueno, me parece que vale que yo conocí a Carla Simón. Este Día Mundial porque se ofreció para leer el manifiesto en el Día Mundial del Sida de todas las plataformas del Comité 1r de Desembre de que hablamos antes. Y vino a leer el manifiesto y también, bueno, que hay una sensibilidad y una vivencia de la situación y que cuando hablabas con ella no estás

hablando con alguien que no sepa de qué va la película. Nunca mejor dicho si... Pero fue muy bonito, muy de agradecer...

RB: ¡Qué bien!

DAVID: ...ha habido gente que han venido, ha habido años que venían actores que, bueno, voy allí no sé muy bien mi... de que me toca a mí, que me toca hablar. Y no era el caso.

ITA: Porque prestaba a la fama, pero en su caso...

DAVID: ...y ella verbalizaba que quería hacer una buena película, que hablara sobre esto, pero que fuera una buena película. No quería hacer un...

RB: ...superficial.

DAVID: Sí, o algo de mil... desde la militancia.

ITA: Sí, desde... protesta...

DAVID: Una protesta. Exacto. Yo quiero hacer una buena película y que hable sobre una situación que es ésta que... bueno...La relación que he tenido. Pero...Muy bien contado.

DAVID: ...es todo bonito.

RB: Sí, sí. ¡Qué bien!

DAVID: Muy bien, Raquel.

RB: Pues muchísimas gracias.

DAVID: Pues muchísimas gracias a ti. Cualquier cosa, sabes cómo encontrarnos.

Interview 2 Translation: SIDA STUDI and Creación Positiva

RB: Thank you for joining me. Firstly, what's the difference between Creación Positiva and SIDA STUDI?

ITA: We're two different organisations. What we have in common is that we share a location, in addition to being good friends.

DAVID: Yes, that's right actually, we're two different organisations, legally speaking – each one has its own statutes and everything else. For the past four or five years, we've shared a physical space, i.e., our two organisations are in this one space. Each of us has our own projects, on our own or with other organisations, and we also have projects that we work on together, because we have known each other, worked together and got on together for many years and we have quite a similar direction in everything relating to the topics of sex education and, above all, views on sexual rights. It's a little... but this is casuistry... when you wrote to me telling me that Ita is the most highly qualified in the whole paediatric HIV area, and in the decade that the film was put forward, and everything else, and the fact that we share a space makes it like this for us. I got up and went to the other side – I paid her a visit and I asked her about it. She told me she liked it and it was as easy as that. But, in reality, we're two organisations. We also cross paths in Catalonia. The platform of the 1st December Committee, which is the platform where most of the NGOs whose work involves HIV/AIDS are, and our two organisations cross paths there also. We've been on the board of this platform, but each one representing the two organisations and we have several combined workspaces. We've known each for a very long time – there's that too. Within the two organisations, some of us... we've worked on this for 20 years and we started it together, so life paths have gone a little on a par with the professional paths...

RB: And to sum up what you do on a day-to-day basis?

ITA: I'll start. At the moment, at Creación Positiva, my work is that of a social worker. That's one important part, and I also play a part in the whole area of group spaces. Anything really for groups... which are groups for people with HIV. Aside from doing this, I do some counselling. It's not the main thing for me because I have colleagues, but sometimes there are times when for whatever reason it's needed, because one of our philosophies is that, if there is a partner or there are relatives or whatever, they have spaces with different professionals, so sometimes I have to come in, as a mediator, to an exercise, and I also lead some counselling processes with some people. I do all of this. At the moment. I take one of the groups we have. It's an emotional support group for *young* people with HIV. Among these young people, there are girls and boys born with HIV as well, who are now in their 20s and 30s. And this is also my experience in a way, which is where David also came to speak to me because, despite the fact that at Creación Positiva I'm not in a specific place, in a specific program that I worked on with children or families or young people at the time, in another association, I was indeed the social worker for a specific program for children with HIV. Because of this, all of the stories, like those of Frida, are very familiar to me indeed, because I've experienced them, as a social worker, very much first hand in some processes and so, now, no... there

was another association called the Fundación Lucía, which no longer exists. It's just disappeared. They worked within the area of paediatric AIDS, as they refer to it. I collaborated there too. So that's basically my experience with what you were saying. With a desire to explore.

RB: Sure, of course, very interesting.

ITA: This is more or less what I do at Creación Positiva. Many other things are done at Creación Positiva, because, apart from the care part, we also have people who work in awareness, in training, in talks, people who work in the area of political impact, in advocacy. So, it's truly endless, and our areas are sexual rights, violence against women and sexual violence.

RB: And do you have any government funds?

ITA: We work with grants from several government agencies, on the whole, yes.

RB: Thank you. And SIDA STUDI, a little bit different?

DAVID: Yes, the truth is that there will be the matter of training, which is where most of our joint projects lie, but SIDA STUDI came about as a centre for pedagogical resources and documentation specifically on HIV – it was started in '87 – and this is one of the two big parts of the organisation. The topic of a centre for documentation, which has progressed. Not only does it now have materials about HIV, but there are also topics associated with health and sex education. Also, since '96, which is when I joined the organisation – it was the year when the first workshops started to be held for young people with the aim of extracting the information present at the centre and to bring it to schools, these being the workshops in the '90s about ways of transmitting and preventing HIV, workshops started at this time. And these workshops have come along a lot, quite a bit or massively and we're something we're currently striving for is a comprehensive topic of sex education from a distinctly feminist perspective and our scope – there's a workshop facilitator here – and our scope of intervention covers children and young people. For the past year and a half, we've also been working with primary schools, with children, from three years and upwards. We've been working with children and young people, with family members and with professionals who work with them. We share this perspective in sex education about sexual rights. We consider from this feminist point of view that, well, the main risk in experiencing our sexuality is being a victim of violence against women. And this is where the two organisations, by carrying out training of trainers, of professionals, or other projects, have done a lot together. This is the story basically and I, personally, have been like a coordinator of the organisation for some 10 years or so. I also give workshops or training sessions in groups with young people, not anymore, because I've always said that when I move further away from this age, I'd stop doing it. So, now I work with professionals and with families; this is what comes my way.

RB: Well, thank you for giving me a little bit of context. In relation to what my thesis is about, I wanted to find out a little bit about your experiences in the '90s, well, it's the context of the film. As we know, after the Franco era and after the *movida*, Spain had a high rate of people suffering from the virus and I wanted to know what happened during that time in relation to community outreach work to educate

people and specifically young people in relation to AIDS, I mean, would you be able to give a general picture?

DAVID: I'll start. Well then, the expert here... and I also thank you for this approach, because a lot of the time we come across certain accounts that you say, well, this account is really far removed from the reality of that point in time. I mean, you've thought about getting to know how we worked as organisations at that time or what kind of messages we were trying to get across and what the reality was, like the one reflected pretty well in the film. And there it would be Ita. She's also one to thank.

ITA: Before writing, you ask questions, because there are a lot of people who write a book first, the book comes out and you say a book's come out about HIV and you say this has nothing to do with reality.

DAVID: In this position, for me... some ideas... and also because I was working at that time in the area of drug addiction, in a therapeutic community. So, in the '80s and '90s, the reality in Spain with the HIV pandemic is that it has strong ties with the phenomenon of risk groups, which was given the wrong name at the time. We've never talked about risk groups, but rather risk practices, which would be a key message, but the reality here in Spain, just as you put it, after the dictatorship, transition and the *movida madrileña*. So, here it wasn't just associated with the H in homosexual people, mostly gay men, but also with the whole area of those who inject drugs, heroin use, basically. So, it was a harsh reality in Spain, which practically finished off a generation, I mean it killed a generation of young people. What we found at that time was that... that it was the final ladder or the final step. There was already the whole matter of how AIDS had been created socially; it seems that it was only affecting certain people. So, if you were gay, you'd come across a lot of problems. But also, if you were a heroin addict, here in Spain, the junkie figure. It was also very much associated with this period of transition. Well, I had a lot riding on it when I worked on what would have been my thesis and everything, but, yes, well, somehow, this junkie figure, like a criminal, was like a scapegoat here in Spain – everything bad was laid at their doorstep.

RB: A scapegoat, yeah.

DAVID: So, nobody cared whatsoever about what happened to these people and whether these people lived or died. Programmes that have been shown to be effective in Europe, like the needle exchange programmes, took ten years to be implemented here. They took longer than 15 years to be implemented in prisons, where people were getting infected and were dying as a direct result. Later on, this very harsh reality, which is associated, this morning, preparing... we've found some time to read what we've been given ... also, it has to do with the reality for many children, that they became orphans because their mum and dad had died as a result of AIDS. But, its origins had been in problematic heroin use, which was being used widely in Spain at the time, but with unprecedented easiness, at ridiculously low prices, and which got a whole generation hooked and which swept them away. What did we do? Everything we could. I think there was indeed the message of human rights. I mean, we're not talking about good or bad, we're talking about people. So, we were asking for there to be resources to be used equally... for any individual who

became infected. But, in reality, it was hitting gay men very hard. Of course, there were organisations in Spain, primarily in Barcelona and Madrid, mainly in Barcelona, that created a lot of political pressure from the gay lobby. So, this was something that was there, and bit by bit a movement was being organised, even with the users, when the programs with... programs like methadone maintenance came about – those very heroin users started to come together and mobilise. And we were also providing whatever support we could at this time with a message from the point of view of awareness and the task that we were performing in terms of political impact or workshops or group interventions, which was a very clear message for us... that it wasn't then and it isn't now that clear that AIDS is a disease, that we're just talking about a virus, and that it's a virus that can affect anyone. The idea that it's not important who you are and what you do, viruses only care how you do what you do, was kind of the message, at the time, or an AIDS is for everyone campaign; this was more or less the message we were trying to put across at the time, with a very, very harsh reality – they were the deadliest years of the pandemic. And so, they were two really affected groups, the population groups, cruelly affected, and that's where we were, what I came across when I went into the schools, that this idea continued to exist, and the kids said to me directly ok, if I'm not a homo, if I don't shoot up, if I'm not a heroin addict, I'm not going to get it. There were those who said it to you and there were those who didn't say it to you. But you knew that this was the starting point, and this was the message that you were trying to dismantle with what you had to hand. Sometimes creating workshops like the ones we'd made, workshops one hour or 50 minutes long. Well, of course, with this amount of time you can't change people's mindsets either. And we worked on this as organisations, just like we do now, on joint projects. We even created countrywide platforms. The 2002 network was a really cool experience. In 2002 in Barcelona, it was a very, very significant time, because the International AIDS Conference was held, in Barcelona.

RB: I didn't know that.

DAVID: And it was the first international conference where the effectiveness of antiretroviral drugs had been demonstrated. It was the first international conference that offered hope for life, with all of the terrible side effects that there were at this time, lipodystrophy, mostly in women. Well, the first time there was any kind of hope and primarily, this hope reached the whole world. I've got the image in my mind – aside from the fact that there was international mobilisation on the part of the associations for the medication to reach developing countries, where at that time there wasn't any kind of access, so, from this demand, the reality for consumers in Spain, we also took action... Hi Irene. ...inundating ourselves with syringes, all the standard for the Government of Catalonia and of Spain, because you still couldn't distribute them in prisons. Or at least not in all of them. It looked like a legacy of Act Up.

RB: Act Up, yes...

DAVID: Very graphic, all over the media. I don't know how many syringes we got rid of there. Well, the demand continued, and people did continue to become infected, despite the fact that the treatments had started to show a certain effectiveness. But it was a start.

RB: Wow, ok.

ITA: I don't have much to add, about this time. It's made me think, for example, I'll always remember the first time I heard about HIV and AIDS. I was with my family. I was at house that belonged to my grandmother, on the outskirts. It was the whole family together. We used to spend a few days in this house in the summer and I had an uncle who was a bit of a hippie, a bit unusual shall we say, who worked in the area of... in the area of drugs and he worked in therapeutic communities and things like that, so, we were having a coffee, you know, talking about what's going on in the world, and he said... there have been two cases. There seems to be an illness that affects the three h's and the three, I don't know... That was the first time I said wow! I'm not sure how old I was but I was old enough, well maybe not enough... The first time, right? After that it was just one of life's things. A friend of mine, a very close friend of mine, who was a doctor, was diagnosed with AIDS and HIV and he taught me everything. At this point, I was in fact an archaeologist. Totally unrelated. Because of this, and of starting to help him work on the creation of associations, to get things moving, and to see how things could be seen differently, that things could change and that everyone is affected. He was the first person who taught me that the thing about risk groups wasn't true – it's the practices that are carried out – and what we have to do with respect to people with HIV. I always say I believe that it's thanks to him, thanks to Jordi, I believe I've never asked anyone if they have HIV or not... this point about respect to always wait for, even as a professional, what the individual wants to do... I don't know, what's behind it all. It's not about a virus, it's about a person with many more things going on in life. And because of this I studied Social Work, now that I was a little older. I'm certain that this was my entry, really, and from this point, from this different outlook, from this different approach and from this questioning, about what was happening, which was being discussed. The HIV epidemic brought up some big taboos. And what happened with these taboos and what they'd done. And something that also came to me when you were talking is that the thing about the junkies or about heroin was also missing the point, because this came from people from La Mina and the junkies who were considered criminals. But it also reached the more developed areas, the posh ones, but it fell upon everyone there as well, because they were also playing with drugs, they also focussed on... with a different viewpoint. Well, many of them ended up committing crime too. It wasn't because of this, but it was indeed something... it wasn't just one social class in particular. Maybe, afterwards, what they were able to do with their addiction was different depending on how privileged they were. But the pain of the death of whole generation was also...

ITA: There was death in groups of friends in the neighbourhood, families, children brought up by grandparents, by aunts and uncles, by whomever... even in the Catalan bourgeoisie. There was that too. It's all been a story, not a generation only in some neighbourhoods, but a generation was failed from one extreme to another. If you like, from left to right, directly.

DAVID: Yes, yes.

ITA: And this is more or less the context, which the film reflects very well. In fact, it reflects it very well, but it doesn't offer much, it doesn't concentrate on giving you information for discussion about what was going on. Perhaps, if you aren't aware

of it, you'll miss it, right? But if you're aware of it, you can see it and you say wow that's heavy! And I saw the tragedy again, reminding myself, and I said bloody hell!

RB: There are some scenes where the grandparents are talking about Neus, Frida's mother who died, and they say something, something like "the things that Neus did with her life," something like that.

ITA: "Neus... your father and your mother made some mistakes."

RB: Yes, that, exactly. And do you think that this culture shock across generations continues to exist or was it more something in the '90s?

DAVID: Yes, and there was an accumulation of stigmas, right? The stigma, in this case of the mum and dad, of being heroin users, which was already a stigma and a figure that is very stigmatised here in Spain, the figure of a junkie. Then there was the stigma over being infected with HIV, so they become junkies suffering from AIDS. Also, these people were of limited means, they didn't have the networks, and a life expectancy that was lower than other profiles of people who became infected. So, because they were of limited means, because their state of health at the time of becoming infected is already very impaired in many cases because of the world of heroin, having to deal with life, not having enough food. So, they were dying young, and in cases where there were children there was a lot of misinformation regarding vertical transmission. So, babies born infected... and mum and dad dying, so...

ITA: And babies and many families were diagnosed through the baby... because there were also people who by... being active junkies they were taken in by the movement. And later on, there was a group of really important people who'd been able to give up drugs, found a brighter side, and left it at that... on the brighter side, after a few years, bam, HIV appears, everyone infected, from when they'd been junkies. And many of these people died... At the start of the pandemic, there weren't any drugs and so a lot of people died. At family level, which is what I worked on later in the program, they were families suffering, firstly through drugs, family, from mothers who were going out to get heroin to give to their children, so they weren't at risk, one thing after another, through these things that seem like a film but were actually real, from boys and girls disowned by their families who don't want them to come back ever again and they lose all of their roots, everything. So, it was a disaster of suffering. And AIDS was here on top of this. Out of the frying pan and into the fire basically. And now you die, if you haven't already died of an overdose, you died now. If you hadn't left it behind, as David said, because you had a state of health from the years of addition that is very complicated and difficult to get treatment, a treatment discipline, and to look after people, who didn't have looking after themselves at the top of their list and people who perhaps could have been forgotten, but there wasn't a cure. I mean, at the start, people were dying every week. You didn't have much time.

DAVID: And in this context, there was also the context reflected in the film, of babies born with HIV. They carried this heavy burden. The taboo, the stigma. Often the images of grandparents are significant, but it's the fact that they're grandparents who've experienced the world of heroin, with their children and their partners. Then the whole world of HIV and now they have a grandchild. So, we always like to play around with good and bad, guilty and innocent. All of this is really complicated

and on the part of the babies, this struck a chord with me regarding some schools, well, such is the stigma of HIV in infancy. At first, it seemed like, when they're babies... they haven't been bad or immoral, not like the homosexuals or heroin addicts. It's not a sin this Judaeo-Christian sin of theirs. The bad people were their parents.

ITA: Like the grandmother says in the film.

RB: Exactly.

DAVID: Exactly. But in reality, the stigma also overcomes them in many cases where they don't know or no one wanted to tell them, or they weren't told that this is what had happened to them. And then all the stigma, above all in the school environment, which is also reflected in the film.

RB: Yes, in the games...

ITA: Exactly. Yes, because it was also a time when it wasn't talked about. No one said they had HIV... that they were infected with HIV, or they had AIDS, or had I don't know... something that... and only gave out information in dribs and drabs and you can't tell anyone what was being thought about. We don't say anything to the children because they're going to let it slip. They're going to go to school and say "you know my dad is poorly with something, I don't know what" so, also, people said they died of pneumonia...cancer, they didn't use to give out the true information, they were girls and boys just the same. We, for example, when we started working on the infancy programme, as it was known, children infected with and affected by HIV, we used to say, and there were already spaces in the form of summer camps for doing fun activities together because one of the things that happened with children with HIV is that they had to take a lot of medication and the schools didn't necessarily know about their diagnosis. They couldn't go to camps where they'd be spending two or three days out in the open because you'd have to tell the teacher that medication needed to be given and so the parents said they couldn't go, and they didn't. But, yes, because there were children who didn't have spaces for leisure and fun, they started to create special summer camps where there could be children with HIV, children with parents with HIV who perhaps had not been infected but had indeed experienced it in their family. So, we had summer camps all together, along with the tablets too of course, it wasn't taboo. It wasn't everything, so, and all of these children were growing up and, at the beginning, also, even if they were infected, they weren't told anything either, because they were going to die, because the truth is, in the beginning, you were told that there were a lot of families who'd been diagnosed because when a child was born, they'd been infected in vertical transmission, as they call it, you know? From mother to the foetus. There used to be this kind of transmission. At the beginning, nothing was known, but they lived for only a few months because they quickly developed AIDS... the disease, they died, and it started being detected. Some mothers were diagnosed through the death of their babies. So, yes, it was... those who were detected in time because they'd already started to do some testing or... in this case they were, in inverted commas, lucky. Some babies born from mothers who were junkies, marginalised because, since they were junkies, they carried out tests on them without asking them, without saying anything, and they were detected and some were from good families that nobody thought would be

there; they died as a result of not taking some things into account, all of the experiences, and some were born infected. Those who are infected are going to die, we don't need to tell them anything. And children whose parents had HIV, just like in Frida's case, and who in the end didn't... there wasn't any transmission, and they weren't infected. But we don't tell them the truth either because they'll let it slip, they'll say it and we're not going to let them suffer because of this. But these children, when the antiretrovirals came into play, they also benefitted children, children who had already been infected to be able to get treated and also everything else, all the efforts for prevention in vertical transmission. This was almost before the antiretrovirals and was very important for taking care, for taking care... for understanding when there were times when there was transmission during pregnancy, during labour... and... breastfeeding... they started giving powdered milk to women, so they didn't have to breastfeed... later the famous Caesareans with antiretrovirals. The vertical transmission rate was also one of the things that went down really quickly.

RB: I read about this on the internet, indeed, in Carla's case, the director of the film, her mother didn't transmit it to her. She wrote in her book that it was 30 per... 50 percent who didn't have the virus after. But in the film, you see all the testing appointments for finding out...

ITA: Because they didn't know... Because at the start, what also happened was that when a child was born to a mother with HIV when they still hadn't got tests as accurate... as precise as today's. So, what they did was an ELISA test, the children's antibodies were measured. And when a baby is born, they have the mother's antibodies because they didn't yet have their immune system and it's at 18 months when they start to let go and create their own defence systems. So, you had to wait 18 months and, if it was still positive, it meant that there had been an infection. If not, it meant that there hadn't been an infection. Now we have all the tests... movements. It's found out as soon as the baby's born and it's known whether there's been transmission and when there hasn't and transfusion of antiretrovirals during labour and lots of very different stories. At that time someone was born and you had to wait 18 months and do tests and wait. So, what happens to her, it was still early days, as well is... and later on also, in the film, the doctor at the Mar Hospital. They were some of the paediatric HIV specialists. She'd been told no, there hasn't been transmission, but the doctor from Girona, who was... who didn't know as much, said well, just in case, I'm going to continue carrying out more tests... I'm going to do some follow up and see what happens. They really didn't know. I mean all of this was a mystery. It progressed in a key way too. So, because of all this, why are you going to tell a child if they're going to die? And the births, the children with HIV? Well, some, as they'd already got the antiretrovirals and all of the new treatments arrived. At first, they didn't say anything to them, they only said be careful with your blood... be careful if you hurt yourself. This is also reflected very well by the film, the phobia over blood and the whole movement. They were told about this a lot and, later, when they got to 13, 14 years of age and the girls were alive. In my case, I say girls because they were all girls at this time, well, they were going to get into relationships at any time. We'll have to tell them that they have HIV. They were starting to get their periods when they started to give diagnoses of HIV to girls and boys 14, 15 years of age, telling them well, everything, because at that time they were going to the doctor every month and some were going every week. They missed a day of school because they were

having gamma globulin transplants for their defences and everything... It was like courses of chemotherapy. They were in the outpatient department all morning, trapped, with doctor Claudia and Doctor Rosa – it was like having an extra member of the family because they'd known them their whole lives and normally the HIV doctors were like gods for these families, you know? Because this was their doctor forever. No, what the doctor says. If the doctor doesn't say it, we don't say it and if the doctor says... I don't know... So, suddenly they said to them, I understand it all now, it wasn't my kidney, it wasn't that I had something. Some had been told truths without going into the details, your body has a virus that we need to keep an eye on, and we have to look after you, which was partly the truth, rather than a lie. But some of them had been directly lied to and, well, they didn't know what their parents had died of, nothing, and they also had their whole journey there. And, well, they'd got this from their mother, who's dead. You can't be like to hell with her. Also, you can't, I don't know, well, difficult processes. Some of them start to become mothers and you say wow... had to say... well, that's it. All of these periods we get through not always the same however many years

DAVID: That's been the journey and it's also gone very quickly, the appearance of antiretrovirals has changed things. I think what it is and what we share from the viewpoint of rights isn't like the stigma there was at other points and in different situations, but what's struck me is the stigma in schools. The idea is that it's verbalised, whether they're going to die, in order that they should go to school and put other children at risk, if in the end we know they're going to die. They were messages that were put out publicly, which you'd hear in the media. It seems that we're now going back a little towards these kinds of messages. In the media in Spain, you can... or there's a time for saying anything, no matter how many rights you violate. And we'd also talked about the stigma of at what point the social need is considered for having a mutual understanding, beyond individual cases of saying it or not, only when... when there is a risk of infecting other young people, when they get to the age people have sexual relationships. They were people at the end of the day. I think all sorts of stigmas were endured, but they were on the edge of it...

ITA: They were the innocent victims. Yes. In theory, they were known as the innocent victims of HIV. But... but their lives must have been really shit.

DAVID: Exactly.

ITA: Not innocent or anything. Because they were burdened with all the stigmas, because they were burdened with their parents' stigma, which is something that any child can experience. As a result of being there, with their grandparents' ones, of being I don't know... surviving all of this.

DAVID: With schools, for example, there have been no cases detected in Spain of transmission in the school environment. Not a single one. It's a legal requirement that the family doesn't, under any circumstances, have any obligation to inform the school.

RB: Yes, exactly.

DAVID: If you do it for, well... logistical reasons, medication, side effects... at your request. And, of course, if someone at the school knows, they can't tell the other families. This is really the setting. So, of course, there were schools we worked with because they'd noticed for whatever reason or there was a suspicion, what should they do... and this is where you truly experienced the stigma, which is what is known as xenophobia, isn't it? Let's give it a name. At that time, it didn't have a name. We didn't talk about stigma either. We talked more about discrimination... and the intention to always give off the same message. We remembered scenes with the headteacher who's like what do I do with the child who has HIV? And, exactly, the thought more or less went in the direction of saying, well, how many children are there in this school? And you know that one of them has an HIV diagnosis and the others don't know and don't have a reason to know. And then there are the teachers. How many teachers are there? Do you know their HIV status? And the cherry on top for someone who was driving us, or rather me, up the wall was, do you know yours? Especially, as headteacher at the school, are *you* infected? Because this idea of only talking about the virus. They don't know if it's a child and if it's an adult...

ITA: It's something for other people to worry about, not me.

DAVID: ...always putting the setting aside. So, these would be the situations that people went through, having the evidence to say and you say it just like that, that it's not going to help anything, that we don't know of any cases at all of HIV transmission in the school environment.

RB: Your colleague sent me a section of an interview from a newspaper which took place outside a school, and they said... 'would you send your child to school if you knew that there was someone infected at your school and they said... 'no, I don't know. I wouldn't. I would.' No one knows... No one has the level of education about AIDS or the virus to talk about these things.

ITA: And this continues, this same kind of interview continues. At the moment, leaving school...

DAVID: I have something about the work environment for adults. I don't want to tell you the wrong thing because I haven't looked it up, but I think it's from 2010 or something like that. The amount of people who would be willing to share the workplace with someone who has HIV.

RB: Yes, exactly.

DAVID: I think it was over 50 percent... 30 who said they wouldn't do so. I have it here. This continues now and at that time there was even more misinformation.

ITA: What people were scared of was death, not the disease. These days, with the waffle there is still, this is starting to make me think of how, in many schools, in the programme I worked on, we also had a role in advising school professionals. In fact, the first schools to start asking for information because they had a pupil with HIV were... came because they were children who were in children's refuges, I mean... you know? They'd lost their father, mother, they were orphans. No family

members survived. So, they were relying on the regional government, the state, because they were in a children's refuge, but they went to normal school and these children's refuges, and these children's refuges gave the information...to the school in some way or another. So here was where they first started to realise and say... because in reality we were working with a lot... the starting point is that there's no law that forces you to reveal your child's diagnosis and the ability to reveal the diagnosis at school is your right. It's a right that your child has and you have, to be able to say in order to receive the most appropriate care that you're looking for. And you can tell only the class teacher. Exactly. Or only the management. And so, there were indeed lots of teachers coming to ask things. They told me they have a child with HIV in my class. What do I do? What happens? So, we worked through a lot of fear there. The teacher's fear. And what happens? We went over the routes of transmission. I had a very interesting part in this case, because I didn't... they hadn't been named as a risk group, so, it was a very weird thing because they didn't know where to put them, you know? And I said no! These are the routes of transmission. You have to be careful... oh I'm going to see blood? It makes me dizzy. Have you ever seen a child who puts... if one of them falls off the swing, if one goes to another one and puts their fingers in and the other one... Afterwards there was a bit of a myth about saliva and toys, those who were toddlers, and all of this.

DAVID: Dummies.

ITA: And normally, when... with the teachers, when you try... talk about offering a response to their fears and what was happening, I'd normally offer a result and you knew that this was work that could help for the future, you know? And we also came into this to tell them to take advantage of this case. You've been given all this information and it's allowed you to see your fears, prejudices, worries...and whatever else, because afterwards in the class you can have half with HIV and if you don't have a reason to know about it, you're not going to know about it, are you? Yes, there were some people who were interested in creating a law where you had to announce it at school level, but this didn't catch on very much.

DAVID: It didn't catch on. Perhaps it didn't catch on because of the advances in medication.

ITA: Yes, this is also true.

DAVID: Exactly, it's a situation that's very uncertain because nobody was very sure what was going to happen in the coming year, and this made us a little uncertain. Information was moving really fast in terms of medication and information about the routes of transmission was very clear and objective and it was certain what it was and what it wasn't, you know? Sometimes we compared it with tuberculosis. It's much easier to transmit because it's airborne, much more so than HIV, for example at school level, you know? In reality, a little one with tuberculosis wouldn't be able to go to school. It was an example that we gave a lot back then. You'd give this example since tuberculosis was also linked to AIDS deaths. The misinformation made it very complicated to manage all of the information and there had indeed been infections directly as a result of heroin.

ITA: Exactly.

DAVID: It was all quite an explosive mix.

RB: There's a scene in the film, where they're talking over Frida's head, in the butchers. They're talking about tuberculosis, and no one really knows... No one has the right level of education about what was happening.

ITA: Well, because... and they also didn't say... because there's the suspicion, because, "oh yes, that's the person who died of pneumonia".

RB: Exactly.

ITA: Very strange, isn't it? I don't know... I'm not saying anything here, but we know what she died of because this also...

RB: It's like... the neighbours talking.

DAVID: But to not even say the word.

ITA: No, the word wasn't mentioned throughout the film.

DAVID: And in this sense, we did see this as a film with knowledge of the cause and of the reality of the time, because that's what it was, the stigma was such that it was unmentionable.

RB: Unmentionable.

ITA: Yes, only... it was unmentionable. No one said it, they said the "thing".

RB: The "thing".

ITA: Yes, the bug.

DAVID: The bug.

ITA: The bug.

DAVID: In terms of care, in the therapeutic community where I was for a year and a half, it was practically every month that a person died, on average. So, outside of Barcelona, in a hospital in Tarragona. There weren't any HIV units, and it was a floor with a room at the end, which didn't have any light or windows. It didn't have anything. Also, people who come to a therapeutic community, from other parts of Spain, we took them in the car, and they were put there to die. But no... they're there. I mean, you already know where... they meet you when you come in. When I went to visit them, it was unmentionable. The name wasn't mentioned. The name AIDS wasn't even mentioned, even as an insult. That was how much of a taboo it was.

ITA: The thing we have, what happened to your mother ...

RB: The thing.

- ITA:** I remember having this feeling when you were doing medical visits with people who were at the therapeutic community and someone who wasn't infected, or not diagnosed, but, well, just because of the act of going to... coming from the therapeutic community, the doctor who was like where you are, I mean, not examining or anything, you'd see them starting to put on gloves and the person would say "I don't have it, I don't have the bug." You know? Well, the doctor, for everyone who came from the therapeutic community... gloves, gowns. The only thing missing was a face mask.
- ITA:** Well, some people had masks on. The experience. I have a friend whose husband, she has HIV, and her husband died... married at 22. He was on a closed-off floor in the hospital, in some rooms that they'd prepared, and they came in literally... you know like in the films when there's an epidemic. Like Ebola.
- RB:** Yes.
- DAVID:** Like Ebola.
- ITA:** Exactly like that. They'd go in like this and the nurse would put down the tray of food so as not to have to go into the room. This is the era Frida is in... It's the era of the film.
- RB:** It's shocking.
- ITA:** It was also... You're going through a difficult time. Your friends, relatives and whoever are dying. After what, you know? That... No respect for human dignity, to be able die in a pleasant way. In fact, for this reason, one of the first... in the era when there were no treatments and everyone died, and, as people who were part of associations, we concentrated on holding workshops about dying, learning about dying, saying goodbye, being able to make decisions and do things. The idea was also to offer dignity in death to people because many... or because the relatives didn't want to see them. They died alone. In the gay world, this was a standard thing, for people who'd been cut out by their families.
- DAVID:** And that was it... exactly... the topic of homophobia. Well, we've now put a name to many things associated with intersectionality.
- RB:** Yes, yes.
- DAVID:** And here there were these phenomena, you know? It was kind of the reality in Spain, a high incidence in gay men and above all in heroin users. And Creación Positiva was very interesting here, even before it became a thing, you were the ones who were starting to talk about the whole topic of the perspective of gender in HIV transmission, weren't you? The first to talk about the topic of how violence against women intersected with infections. What happened to women when they became infected because they didn't appear to exist. They weren't taken into account in any variables, in any medical studies, in new tests, or in new protocols. Women weren't taken into account in any areas. Then there were women who were lesbians, who... or didn't have a sexuality or, if they had it, they didn't catch it because they only touched and kissed. They were also the first to bring it to the

table. From this intersectionality, when the person infected was a woman, and she'd had problematic heroin use, been involved in sex work. I mean, this woman had disappeared. I mean she had no visibility, which is something you offer via certain programmes like Actúa, which became Creación Positiva. In a month's time you'll be holding your 15th conference.

ITA: Yes, we have some conferences at Creación Positiva about the intersection between HIV and violence against women, in the sense of a woman suffering as a result of violence against her. She's much more vulnerable to HIV infection and a woman who has HIV is much more vulnerable...

RB: ...to violence...

ITA: ...to sexist violence. These are our conferences. It's been 15 years since we started addressing these topics. If you're interested, have a look on our website. Most of the talks are on there.

DAVID: Again, this is what we call intersectionality, but when... lots of women, when they're controlled, things that have... For example, the topic of side effects of the first antiretroviral treatments. How could they not have done any studies in women? I remember the conferences. The side effects on the hair, on the face... lots of things. It hadn't been considered that they might occur because they hadn't carried out experiments in women. Many women took medication and they'd only done the first studies in men.

ITA: The only thing they did was to adapt it based on weight... a little... This also happened with children. Rather, they stopped researching antiretroviral treatments etc. in children, because now very few babies are born with HIV, so it wasn't considered important and not worth investing in. What we did was take the research on people, on adult men, and adapt it based on weight and that's it. And also... well...

ITA: ...just like with women.

DAVID: Whilst here, I don't know... we talked to Montse or María Luisa. Now there's been investment with the pharma industry to get things like PrEP; we have the pill to stop us getting infected. They've stopped researching treatments for children, who aren't affected *here*, but worldwide...

ITA: In other countries...

DAVID: Exactly, in other countries, lots of babies continue to be born with HIV and they don't have the doses, now, in 2020, there's no medication for children. Everything's an adaptation of medication for adults. Well, I guess there's not a market there, because... well...

RB: Yes, everything's about money, isn't it?

ITA: It's a matter of business.

RB: Capitalism.

DAVID: At the end of the day, it's a little... yes. And no one mentions also that things... when they started to control vertical transmission, right? Knock-on effects. And a lot of the time this leads to structural violence against women. They'd carry out HIV tests on lots of women without asking their permission, always for the benefit of the baby. Since many women find out they have HIV this way, and they've only had relations with their partner, through marriage, a ring, well...

ITA: And there was also... there have been many women who... and the awful things that still happen now... women who feel unwell for years, the healthcare circuit, doing tests that you had to do. I remember a woman, from the Basque Country, from Navarre, who said... I've just had a child; I didn't recover and I was saying to my GP give me an HIV test. This happens a lot. Give me an HIV test. She's a normal woman, married to a normal man, and you can't have HIV. Because of her environment, the relations she'd had. She said I've got a suspicion, please give me the test...

RB: Give me the test, yes...

ITA: ...and in the end they said this is getting frustrating, I'll just give you the test, but it's not going to go away, and the doctor had to tell her it was HIV. She had to take this in. And this still happens to us now. The other day a woman came in who'd recently been diagnosed. After three years of feeling like something was going on, something's not working, the dermatologist sending her somewhere, the gynaecologist sending her somewhere else, I don't know. But it didn't cross anyone's mind to carry out an HIV test. Well, it did cross someone's mind, they didn't consider it because there weren't the right indica... because she was a "normal" woman...

RB: "Normal"

ITA: ...a "normal" woman. You say, come on! Late diagnoses in women happen a lot, when everything's already more complicated, you know? When the immune system has already been hit a lot from recovering. It's not easy. And this continues to happen, but then it was... it's not that normal woman... well, if you were a junkie, and it's the first thing they'd ask you. Have you taken drugs? No!

DAVID: if you haven't done drugs, and you're not a junkie or a prostitute...

RB: You're "normal".

DAVID: You're "normal".

ITA: So, they'd end up saying... No! But my boyfriend was a junkie. Because... exactly, because it can also be heterosexual relationships.

DAVID: Exactly, and how many of...

ITA: ...transmission...

DAVID: ...from partners. In fact, I remember, I don't know if the... I was going to say the UNAIDS mandate, but it's not a mandate. The proposal in the '90s, you know? Late diagnosis. I saw a slide at a conference comparing things between men and women. The difference is enormous. And this is the... this is the patriarchy and structural violence against women. And this happens today.

ITA: And among homosexual and heterosexual men too. In fact, sometimes, in the group of young people... young people with all the different situations, I'm alive. I had a very late diagnosis, but because I was young, you know? And you'd get infected very... saying "but I'm alive" because I went to the GP and I was feeling... there was something not quite right, angina.... I don't know, and when they sent me home with some things and when... because it was... outside ... saying they performed tests on me for everything and it was fine. I'm going to do an HIV test. And they did the test. And they did the HIV test because he was gay and was lucky. They caught it with a CD4 I think. But he was lucky because he was...

DAVID: If I'm heterosexual, I'm dead.

DAVID: Exactlyand you know what? It's discrimination.

RB: Because it's not about being gay...

DAVID: In this case, it saved his life, but...

ITA: Yes, but...

DAVID: ...this is the internalised stigma, isn't it?

RB: Yes.

DAVID: And how it's transferred, you know? We have a telephone HIV information service. And now we've got a new colleague. She's surprised at how most of the queries we receive are about infidelities on the part of men. I mean, this is the evidence, isn't it? I had a relationship with someone who's not my long-term partner and, with the window period, which is also interesting. I mean, at the best of times you have to wait six months. But the question is and now what do I do? I say, we're only here to give out information, but... Exactly, this is the reality. And sometimes they say I'm not going to use a condom with my long-term partner. I've never used one. And the last 40 years, how do I tell her that now I want to use a condom or how do I tell her that I don't want to have... I'm not going to tell you what to say to your partner, but if you don't want to put her at risk...

RB: ...you have to do it. I've never thought about that. I'm a little naïve.

ITA: We spend each day listening to this sort of thing and so....

DAVID: Exactly.

ITA: ...we're very well informed, but I'm sure, in the end, I'm not that knowledgeable.

RB: No... no, but... this film, Summer 1993, has been useful because, exactly we have films from Almodóvar that talk a little bit about...

ITA: ...all of this...

RB: ...about AIDS and the like, but... the reality of a family and, well... perhaps... there was one Almodóvar film where they're going between Barcelona and... which is about...

ITA: All About My Mother. But the mother was a nun...she'd slept with someone who was trans. And, also, she was Toni Cantó.

DAVID: Yes, Toni Cantó... ...very complex, very Almodóvar.

RB: Yes. But about *Pain and Glory*, because there was a scene where you can see intersectionality well... the one when they go to buy drugs and there's some graffiti on the wall and it says: Hashtag I believe you. And so, we can clearly see the intersectionality in... with feminism and discrimination... with being gay in the Almodóvar film, I think. But that's a different story.

ITA: I haven't seen that.

DAVID: I have... I liked it, I like it a lot... but, well, we've put that sometimes we say we come from the Ice Age, like we've experienced things that now have names like this intersectionality. I think that it was intersectional... but the stigma. And in the case of the babies, this was AIDS, heroin, it was everything, the whole family environment.

ITA: Being an orphan, being an orphan in Spain is a stigma in itself, isn't it? You've ended up without a family, without any roots, from a young age...

RB: Yes, it is.

ITA: ...it's a situation. I remember at school, before HIV, I'm much older now... an orphan, you know? Afterwards, there was the stigma of parents who'd separated. The parents have separated.

RB: Yes, also... there's a name for it, isn't there?

DAVID: We have to help...

RB: "not current children", or something like that.

DAVID: I don't know. I remember, but... about being separated. We have to help "Sánchez" ... I remember the surname. I don't remember this kid's face, but... the teacher...

ITA: They were the first couples to separate and...

DAVID: They got divorced.

ITA: They got divorced... a normal world. All families had to have a father and a mother, clearly, other things...

RB: Nuclear family.

ITA: ...suggesting and suddenly the family split. There was the possibility of splitting... had its own stigma. A bit. I remember I had an aunt who didn't like her children to play at the house of some kids at school, kids whose parents were separated.

RB: Oh my god.

ITA: Yes, and... it's like come on, what's going on?

RB: But... it has nothing to do with children's games.

ITA: Well, they didn't like them to come across these different things. It's about differences, lack of control, fear.

RB: The other...

DAVID: Yes, exactly. And it was another intersectionality about these children.

ITA: Yes, yes, orphans. Because, before, also, this reminded me that the first schools to start having consultations, because it still wasn't being talked about, were schools where there were children from refuge homes. And so, since they were going to school, the regional government did indeed give a diagnosis. They were... they had custody and were able to give this information. And it was easier to decide in children's cases where it's just a number, I imagine, but they were the first ones, when in the schools and, after, when parents or families, grandparents, or whoever, came and you had to say to them no, no, no... it's not an obligation, it's a right that you have. you have the right to provide or not to provide information, you know?

RB: At least... after the refuge centres... you said about having children in your schools with the virus. At least, then the schools got in contact with the educational centres, did they?

ITA: Well, I mean, they didn't have a solution because they were teachers from the children's refuge. They're parents. Here, for many refuge centres, for children, the intention was to send them to school locally, so they go outside. They're not old-fashioned orphanages where they did everything. The intention was for them to have a life, to go to the gymnasium, to the swimming pool, to do activities. And there, as legal representatives, they gave information about the children. They didn't know very well either... Also, with refuge centres, they also started to be among the first ones that consulted, because these couldn't even decide... They were there and now what did we do? What do we have to do? How do we help? In what way do we look at this?

DAVID: Yes.

ITA: ...intersectionality with the stigmas... it's interesting, I think. If something...

RB: ...being an orphan and having parents who've died from...

ITA: ...junkies.

RB: Yes.

ITA: ...died as a result of AIDS and...

DAVID: Yes, the cycle doesn't end, because there was the film, well, going with her aunt and uncle there's a certain proximity, a certain sensitivity, but they usually go with their grandparents. Or they go directly to an orphanage or a refuge centre... and the grandmother, I'll say it again, it's someone who's gone through the whole heroin process first, with all the destructive aspects that it has on family, to find yourself in situations, your child has lied to you, has robbed you after going, to get it, loads of things, with all the humiliation that comes with problematic heroin taking, then AIDS and then the grandchild has lost parents.

ITA: Yes... we were talking about grandparents, which is a very interesting topic. Because, for example, imagine the grandma in the film with her vision and everything, and in this case, the girl is going to stay with a younger mother and father, but a lot of the time this wasn't the case. It's often another family member, in the generation in between, who helped, and they stayed and grew up with this grandmother, with all of this...with all of this, you know? And with over-protection.

RB: Yes.

ITA: And initially, with over-protection and a history of rejection, because they were women who'd already experienced so many losses and they were told that their grandchild could die... with this there was also a certain level of emotional distancing, in case of yet another loss. And there'd been some very complicated situations...

DAVID: I'm going to give some talks for Fundación Lucía. The topic came up after experiencing all of this. Now the antiretrovirals are appearing, now you don't die and so, say it to them too... and the grandma who's waiting for the process. Now I have to explain about having HIV. and how I explain it from my experience of HIV, I mean, your mother, who was my daughter, everything I've experienced. Now, as I'm talking about it, well, they're very burdensome situations and, above all, because socially, well, everything we were talking about before, let's imagine it without the ability to even mention the word. Exactly, this must finish you off.

ITA: It consumes you from within. And then they're growing up. And in adolescence, well, you try weed, gosh... Exactly, there's a lot of fear, you know? Of going through it all again, of something like this happening again. With an adolescent energy, and they... because some of them were relatively young grandparents at the start, but later on...

RB: ...going from a period...

- ITA:** it's like... exactly, it happens...situations for these children, boys and girls and now they're adults, living a life full of... a very particular life, and we talk about it a lot in the young people's group, since there are young people who have become infected now as adults and some by birth. They're talking about... people who have HIV as an adult talk about before and after, you know? I was someone before the infection...
- RB:** ...and after.
- ITA:** And for the children it's always. They don't have a before or after, they've always had... Sometimes they say, when they didn't know about it, but they've still experienced it, they haven't and so here they have a perspective and a contribution that is completely different.
- RB:** They've experienced it their whole lives.
- ITA:** In fact, there was...thinking about Elisa, who is a... she did a program the name of which I can't remember, that went out as a weekly report, one of those... I don't know where it is...
- DAVID:** Víctor has it.
- ITA:** Because there was the story of a girl called Carla, who talks about her life, her family, about her parents who died. There was also an interview with her...
- DAVID:** Yes.
- ITA:** ...she speaks about it and she's now in her 30s and her story is also very interesting because there were three girls, three sisters, and only she became infected. She's in the middle. The older and younger sisters didn't become infected. The mother died... so they were in the care of their grandmothers. Then the father died. The father died and they were now a bit older, but she, who was the only infected person in the family, had gone through the whole journey of... with the father to the doctor and she did all the accompanying of her father until his death – they were all really young. And she also talks about something else there like... another situation like...
- RB:** It'll be useful to see.
- ITA:** And it's interesting, I think, if I remember rightly, because there were images of the family. I'm going to have a look back.
- DAVID:** I had another look. When Elisa came... I re-watched the... the documentary. Yes, because... It's a documentary
- ITA:** It's interesting.
- ITA:** This is one of the cases I most recognise. and there are many things that are the same and that are different. But at the same time, it confirms that for me it's really

important that... What happens in the film is a very specific life, it's a story and she's also said that, it's very specific, but it's very generalised.

RB: It's fiction, in a film about summer 1993.

ITA: But she... because you could say I'm becoming a film director and I'm telling my life story, of what happened to me with my grandfather, that I came from I don't know and I had blue eyes. And it's your story. But in this case, Frida's story, what's in the film, statistically, has been the case for many people.

RB: Very general.

ITA: It has many aspects that are very... comparable, that everyone experienced, all happening together. It's the process... because they've also experienced this, you know? It's where I come from and what I have and how I go about new things, how she decides that they're her parents, that she has new parents, how she does it, how she puts them to the test, how she searches; this is about child psychology.

RB: Yes, exactly.

ITA: But all of it is a story and this is about watching it and saying, wow, how many more? I've seen this in a lot of families, each one with a different story, everything. But there's something that's very common.

RB: Across everything.

ITA: ...that it reflects a generation, a period, a point in time for many families. And, in fact, I think they got a lot of letters and in the young people's group that I know, many people say it was very important to see this film because it was like seeing themselves.

RB: Okay.

ITA: This is my story told somewhere and it's exactly my story. If I didn't know it was her, I'd have thought that someone was telling my story.

RB: My story, yes.

ITA: Many young people, now adults, who say this is about their story.

RB: It seemed to me that the family only told the truth. They only explained things about AIDS to Frida at the end of... Well, when they're sitting at the table asking... asking her aunt what's happening? What happened to my mum? Are you going to die to, or not? All these things seem to me... The film is an educational tool because... it demonstrates that in the end she finds her place with her new family. But, before this, what's happening has to be explained, because throughout the film, she doesn't understand... All the adults are talking... above her head or through a window or she hears some little bits... and she doesn't understand, because nobody has explained what's happened and what happened to her mother.

- ITA:** Something really interesting that happens to children as well is that they tell her about it when she asks because she hadn't already asked them, and this was also one of the big topics when we were working with the grandmothers, and this whole topic...to say when, when they ask; each child asks at a different time and they normally ask you at the time you least expect it, which is what happens to her, when she's lining her schoolbooks and they're in another... It was like bang! The girl is asking in the face of...it was like a response. It's really well done because it's so real. And we also work really hard to say... they'll ask you one day and this day doesn't have to be the only conversation about it. It's something that will be talked about their whole life and at each point, with all ages and in every process in life new things will be understood, embraced, there will be new and different meanings to things. It's something that always goes with you and has to have a place in your life. The mother... lots of people talk about the other mummy, who's in heaven or the mummy who's I don't know. This is all very well, but it's not... They do hide it, it's true, but also there's a part that's very well dealt with because they do it really well, this mother, this father. Not everything went like this. They do it really well and they do it when the girl asks, because if...
- DAVID:** The process...
- ITA:** If you give her information before she asks... But, yes, it reflects it really well, she's listening to things and she listens and watches, but still doesn't know how to ask. And she's there and what the film tells you is that it doesn't seem like it but I'm understanding everything, and I know everything about what you're talking about and everything that's happening. And when the time comes...
- RB:** ...I'm going to ask.
- ITA:** I'll say it, when I feel safe and part of the family. It's the final scene...
- RB:** Exactly.
- ITA:** And I'm laughing, now I can cry.
- RB:** Okay.
- ITA:** ...and so she cries.
- RB:** So, it's a good reflection of the, let's say correct, process for...
- ITA:** The psychological process and for accompanying is perfect. Indeed, this I don't think could in families and her too; I think I listened to her speak in an interview... in the summer. It's something that lasted a long time, because I said in the first summer, I'm not calling them mummy and daddy, I mean, in the film I have to put it across in some way and what's clear is that she decides to do it, you know?
- RB:** It's a process, yes.
- ITA:** But... In this sense, here... I'll also defend it a bit... a little bit. It wasn't that easy to give this information because, as we were saying before, because at this time we didn't have the information that we have now and you had to take a position, it

was the position that we took in our training and in starting out from... we're going to talk about, about... about the how, the what, we're going to break apart the risk groups, we're going to talk. This is something that can happen to anyone: how can we deal with it, what are our fears, where do we discriminate. It wasn't that easy to find this, but also, in humanity we sometimes have good things and in times of crisis some people commit atrocities, like in the film, but there are people who know how to act, you know? This is also important.

RB: That's true. Well, thank you. One final question, we've said that some stigmas have continued to exist – I wanted to ask you whether, with all of the work you do and what happens at schools, whether there are classes about sexual health these days, if these have changed and, if these days, young people understand more about AIDS?

ITA: I'll tell you something... I mean we're not really in a place – I wouldn't say either that... I got to know a boy who had become infected with HIV, now, and his dad died of AIDS. For me, it was like wow... and I said I know all about AIDS in my family, because my father died, because I was told about it.

DAVID: And he became infected...

ITA: And not because he's stupid, because he didn't want know, because he was someone... because it's not that simple.

DAVID: Exactly. If you were looking for a provocative headline, I'd say that for young people AIDS doesn't exist, even now, it doesn't exist, I mean, they don't take it into account in their experiences of sexuality. You know? What's going on with the infections or what happens when everyone puts their hands on their heads? Because right now we haven't been able to lower the number of infections between gay and bisexual men and other men who have sex with men. It hasn't been possible to lower this. Well, our response there is that what surely is missing is sex education, but in capital letters, a feminist sex education that takes into account that there is a violent structure and that there are relationships of privilege and oppression, sex education for the current time, here, in schools. We always talk about schools, but because it's the only space in our entire lives that is truly universal. I mean, it's obligatory to go to school from age six until age 16. So, our position is to take advantage of this space. Sex education in schools is in the hands of the willingness of the particular people at the schools, who decide to take a position, who decide to call when... the council offers some talks. Let's take the ones about sexuality, you know? Or if I didn't like it that much, I'll look for someone else... or we'd like, for example, we have an approach for working for six hours with the groups, instead of 50 minutes, separating boys and girls in some sessions, working with the families, working with the teachers. These are what we call motivated teachers, who are in some schools.

ITA: And who don't have parent associations that make it difficult.

DAVID: Exactly.

RB: yes, like what's happening with Vox.

ITA: ...the more hippy-type schools and with a more open tradition. I don't know

DAVID: This is what I was talking about.

ITA: But now, with the far right...

RB: Yeah.

DAVID: ...we're going back to messages... or this *pin parental* parent veto .

RB: Yeah, the *pin parental*, in the newspapers.

DAVID: Exactly. This isn't taken into account a lot of the time. But, yes, exactly, we're talking about the fact that HIV is not being reduced amongst gay and bisexual men. Exactly, where there's the topic of sex education in capital letters. When sexual diversity has been discussed, there is recognition of people's experiences of homosexuality, first relationships, spaces for exchanging ideas. This is where we think it has to come in, because people can make responsible decisions. That the stigma continues is another piece of evidence I think too. No matter how much they don't take into account AIDS in the variable of things that can happen to them, because AIDS is part of history and it's no longer a death sentence, and this is evidence. Well, people who become infected, the good news is that they're not going to die, but they're people who, in a lot of contexts... and you continue working on this. You can't talk about it publicly. My brother, who has nothing to do with this world, says, well, you live in your world and in your bubble, but in the real world, he's a geologist, he works in a company going all around the world and he says here there are things that you can't say. You can't even say cheerfully whether I'm gay or not gay, let alone if I have HIV or if I don't have HIV. It depends on the context. But this normalisation that we often try to say already exists, is already achieved, isn't there. And this is really the big problem for us.

RB: This lack of...

DAVID: This lack of sex education, but not of sex education meaning prevention of prevention of HIV. No.

ITA: You don't have to do this. This, I don't know... but rather spaces where you can talk and you can reflect and you can feel and you can talk about gay experiences, what my sexuality is like, mine, not *the* sexuality, mine.

DAVID: Mine.

ITA: I can see it in my nephews and nieces. I don't know... ...you can talk, you can bring up any concerns, you can question things, well, we still need to talk about sexuality....in the rest of society, it doesn't exist.

RB: There is still much to improve the situation. We tried to do it... I used to volunteer at a youth club after school and we tried to do it. Then, the government made cuts to all the youth clubs and so we no longer have this method of teaching young people to be able to talk about sex, to talk about drugs. It was a space for talking and for helping and to do what interested them, but now we don't have it. It's...

DAVID: Well, that's it really, isn't it. I mean, what are they really investing in, at government level, what is the investment in prevention? The investment in prevention is the condom purchase you make each year. It's getting ridiculous. This strategy didn't come to me until the '90s. Prevention was ignored. I mean, what is the goal of this strategy? For those with HIV... are we looking out for their health? Or is the goal to control them so they don't infect others? We're only worried about this. I mean, what are we worrying about as a society? From this '90s idea, white, Caucasian privileged governments, that's where we are – we're looking for people with HIV, trying to detect them.

ITA: So, none of them get away...

DAVID: So, none of them get away... without understanding why women are underdiagnosed, because they don't want to look at it from a feminist point of view or feminist view towards reality. And, well, so, that's where we are, you know? With an unreal world, from a really aseptic immunology and with a reality that continues to be overwhelming. And we don't have the same freedom to live out our sexualities in this hetero-cantered patriarchal system.

RB: Exactly.

DAVID: If you're a woman, well I'm a man, and if you're straight, you're gay... and all of these are factors for vulnerability that are accumulating.

RB: Exactly. And if we don't have spaces like we talked about for education...

ITA: Because they're also factors and points for vulnerability talking about, towards the end of Christmas, with people... when you talk about points of vulnerability, people think they come with something... it's something that's come from outside, that you can't do anything about it, you know? This poor person has this point of vulnerability, not We create them ourselves, as a society. It's not about points... We *make* the points of vulnerability...

DAVID: It's not born with them, exactly.

ITA: It's not like, look this poor person was born with a... ...it doesn't come from this. It's not like this person... look... detected – it's that they're more vulnerable, I mean, what are we doing so that...?

RB: For it not to be like this.

DAVID: How are we making...?

ITA: What we doing to make it and how are we participating and what are we dealing with? Because it's something that concerns everyone.

RB: We create this concept of “other”, the other thing, which we don't know about.

DAVID: Yes.

ITA: To protect us.

RB: Thank you so much for speaking to me. I've learnt so much and there were so many things I didn't know before and I've learnt so much because of this. Because, it's like you said, I don't want to write about the '90s and AIDS and HIV in Spain without asking questions.

DAVID: Do you know how to get in touch? And we were saying this morning, I don't know... there are other people, it's not that or we don't have the work. But the way we see it, we'd like to thank anyone who wants to talk about this subject. Recognising the experience, whether ours or someone else's, but people who we've had here, we've had this experience. This is also appreciated. Not everyone does it.

RB: I'm glad.

DAVID: So, good luck.

DAVID: Any questions, you know where we are. You know how to contact Víctor. And now what I will say is... to say goodbye. The TV documents.

ITA: Yes, the TV documents.

DAVID: It wasn't long ago that it came my way, because the author came here...

RB: Okay.

DAVID: ...and we had an interview. And what else was I going to say... to ask you, if you want, when people come here doing research or studies, you can send it to the documentation centre.

RB: Okay.

ITA: Your study, your thesis.

DAVID: Well, your thesis is really interesting...

RB: It's very long.

DAVID: Most of all this chapter.

RB: I might have an article that's potentially going to be published in a British academic journal. This might be better for the library, but we'll keep in contact and if I have anything...

DAVID: Well, we'll always offer it... And we also like it because there's a lot of research. For example, a lot of students come from institute the with their final projects. Well, there's starting to be a lot of work there, with the academic levels that they have. They're done at an institute. But, well it's also a very interesting viewpoint,

that of a young person from this time talking about something. Well, that's it, when they come, people who hadn't heard of AIDS, well, it's interesting, it's also the purpose of the centre, you know? As an association, we can catalogue what interests us, and these things seem really interesting. Also linked, because... as a result of the acquisition policy, we gather documentation only, either in Spanish or the official languages of Spain or talking about Spain. This chapter is very tied in with the film. It's also a film that's had an impact here in Spain, commercially, not in our underworlds.

DAVID: Yes, in festivals... who are going with this theme again, it's called... I heard a talk.

ITA: it was or well...

DAVID: Yeah?

RB: ...best foreign film.

ITA: That rings a bell. ...An interview where they said... yes, you're going to... I think so... damn it... Something like that or I might be getting it mixed up with something else...

RB: No, I'll look it up.

ITA: ...it's had... Also, yes, because it's been very interesting, because it's taken the topic of HIV, but from... from the success of the film... cinematographic, you know? Like a documentary or an activist – what am I trying to say? but it's come from above, you know? To say a film, or a good film...

DAVID: A commercial success...

ITA: ...something that's been a success, that's got a result, that's been watched, and talks about HIV. It was when she started to tell her story.

DAVID: In fact, I have an anecdote – well, it seems like a good time to mention that I met Carla Simón, this World AIDS Day, because she offered to read the manifesto on World AIDS Day for all the 1st December Committee's platforms we were talking about earlier. And she came to read the manifesto and, well, there was all a sensitivity and an experience to the situation. When we talked with her, you're not talking to someone who doesn't know where the film is coming from. Never better said... It was really nice, very praiseworthy...

RB: Amazing.

DAVID: There have been people who've come, there have been years when actors have come who, well, I'm coming here, I don't know that much about my... why I'm here, what I'm talking about. And this wasn't the case.

ITA: Because they enjoyed the fame, but in her case...

DAVID: ...and she made it clear that she wanted to make a *good* film, which talks about this, and it was indeed a good film. She didn't want to do a...

RB: ...something superficial.

DAVID: Yes, or something... about militancy.

ITA: Yes, a... protest...

DAVID: A protest. Exactly. I want to make a good film that talks about a situation that's, well...

ITA: the film...

RB: Very well told.

DAVID: ...it's all really nice.

RB: Yes, yes. Fantastic.

DAVID: Great, Rachel.

RB: Thank you so much...

DAVID: Well, thank *you*. Anything else, you know how to contact us.

Information Sheet for Participants

INFORMATION SHEET – INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT



TITLE OF RESEARCH: Orphans and the Turn(s) to Childhood in Spanish Visual Cultures: From Transition to Transaction

RESEARCHER: Rachel Beaney

CONTACT DETAILS: Cardiff School of Modern Languages
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66A Park Place
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Who is doing the research?

The research project will be carried out by Rachel Beaney, a postgraduate research student from the School of Modern Languages at Cardiff University.

What is the purpose of the research?

The purpose of this research project is to explore the filmmaking process and the socio-historical context regarding the feature film *Summer 1993* (Simón, 2017).

Who is being invited to participate and what is the type of information gathered through the interviews?

For this specific fieldwork, I wish to interview the producer and director of photography of the film *Summer 1993* (Carla Simon, 2017). I also wish to speak with outreach workers at both the SIDA STUDI and the Creación Positiva, Barcelona to gain an insight into the kind of outreach work that was being undertaken in 1990s Spain at the time of the AIDS crisis (the socio-historical context of the film in question).

What happens if I wish to withdraw?

If you wish to withdraw from the interview at any point, please tell the researcher. Any data previously collected will then not be included in the final project. Involvement in this research is completely voluntary. You have the right to change their mind about being involved in the research project at any point.

Confidentiality and privacy: what will happen to my data?

The interviews will be recorded but these recordings will only be accessible to the researcher and will not be published. The data collected through the focus group sessions will be stored on a private and secure server at Cardiff University and will only be accessible to the researcher and her supervisors. The researcher intends to present and publish some of the information from these interviews in the form of a PhD thesis. The researcher **may** present and publish the research results at academic conferences and in academic publications such as journals. The research is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. The data

collected will only be used for these purposes. The researcher will take steps to avoid reporting any data which may be considered sensitive.

Many thanks for your cooperation,

Rachel Beaney

Additional Contact Information	
Researcher's Supervisor	<p>Dr Ryan Prout School of Modern Languages Cardiff University</p> <p>Professor Sally Faulkner Department of Modern Languages University of Exeter</p>
Cardiff School of Modern Languages Ethics Committee (SREC)	<p>This project has received ethical approval from the Cardiff School of Modern Languages Research Ethics Committee on 13/12/19 (Internal Reference: 201920PGR03)</p> <p>The Cardiff School of Modern Languages Research Office can be contacted at: School Research Officer Cardiff School of Modern Languages Cardiff University 66A Park Place Cathays Cardiff CF10 3AS Email: mlang-research@cardiff.ac.uk</p>

Research Ethics Consent Form for Participants

CONSENT FORM – INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT



Consent Form

TITLE OF RESEARCH: Orphans and the Turn(s) to Childhood in Spanish Visual Cultures: From Transition to Transaction

RESEARCHER: Rachel Beaney

CONTACT DETAILS: Cardiff School of Modern Languages
Cardiff University
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Cathays
Cardiff CF10 3AS
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Research Overview

The purpose of my overall PhD research project is to analyse the representation of the orphan child in Spanish visual cultures. For this specific fieldwork, I wish to gather data through interviews with the filmmakers of *Summer 1993* (Simón, 2017) and outreach workers in NGOs that promoted education around HIV AIDS during the 1990s.

Involvement in Research

The information and insights you share will be documented in this research. If you agree, interviews will be recorded via a digital recording device. Data will be stored on a registered Cardiff University computer that will be password controlled and will be used for research purposes only.

The researcher intends to present and publish the results from this research in the form of a PhD Thesis and articles for academic journals. The research is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

Interview Consent Form

I understand that my participation in this project will involve participation in interviews about my work.

I understand that participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason.

I understand that I am free to ask any questions at any time. If for any reason I experience discomfort during participation in this project, I am free to withdraw.

I understand that the information I provide will be held confidentially. The data will be stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

Please indicate whether you agree with the following statements, please initial box:

	Initials
I have read and understood all the information provided and have received adequate time to consider all the documentation.	
I have been given adequate opportunity to ask questions about the research.	
I am aware of, and consent to the written and/or digital recording of my discussion with the researcher.	
I consent to the information and opinions I provide being used in the research.	

Participant Declaration

I consent to participate in the interviews conducted by Rachel Beaney, Cardiff School of Modern Languages.

Signature:

Print Name: Date:

Additional Contact Information	
Researcher's Supervisor	Dr Ryan Prout School of Modern Languages Cardiff University & Professor Sally Faulkner School of Modern Languages University of Exeter
Cardiff School of Modern Languages Research Office	This project has received ethical approval from the Cardiff School of Modern Languages Research Ethics Committee on 13/12/19 (Internal Reference: 201920PGR03) The Cardiff School of Modern Languages Research Office can be contacted at: School Research Officer Cardiff School of Modern Languages Cardiff University 66A Park Place, Cathays Cardiff CF10 3AS Email: mlang-research@cardiff.ac.uk